REVEALED MERC'S SHOCK NEW LOOK

FIRST FOR NEWS AND REVIEWS EVERY WEEK

AUTOCAR

EST. 1895 | AUTOCAR.CO.UK | 15 OCTOBER 2025

RADICAL NEW FERRARI

Can they really make *the* ultimate electric supercar?

AUTOCAR
IMAGE

TECH SECRETS OF VW'S NEXT GTI

LAMBO USED GUIDE: A £130K BARGAIN...

NEW KIA DRIVEN

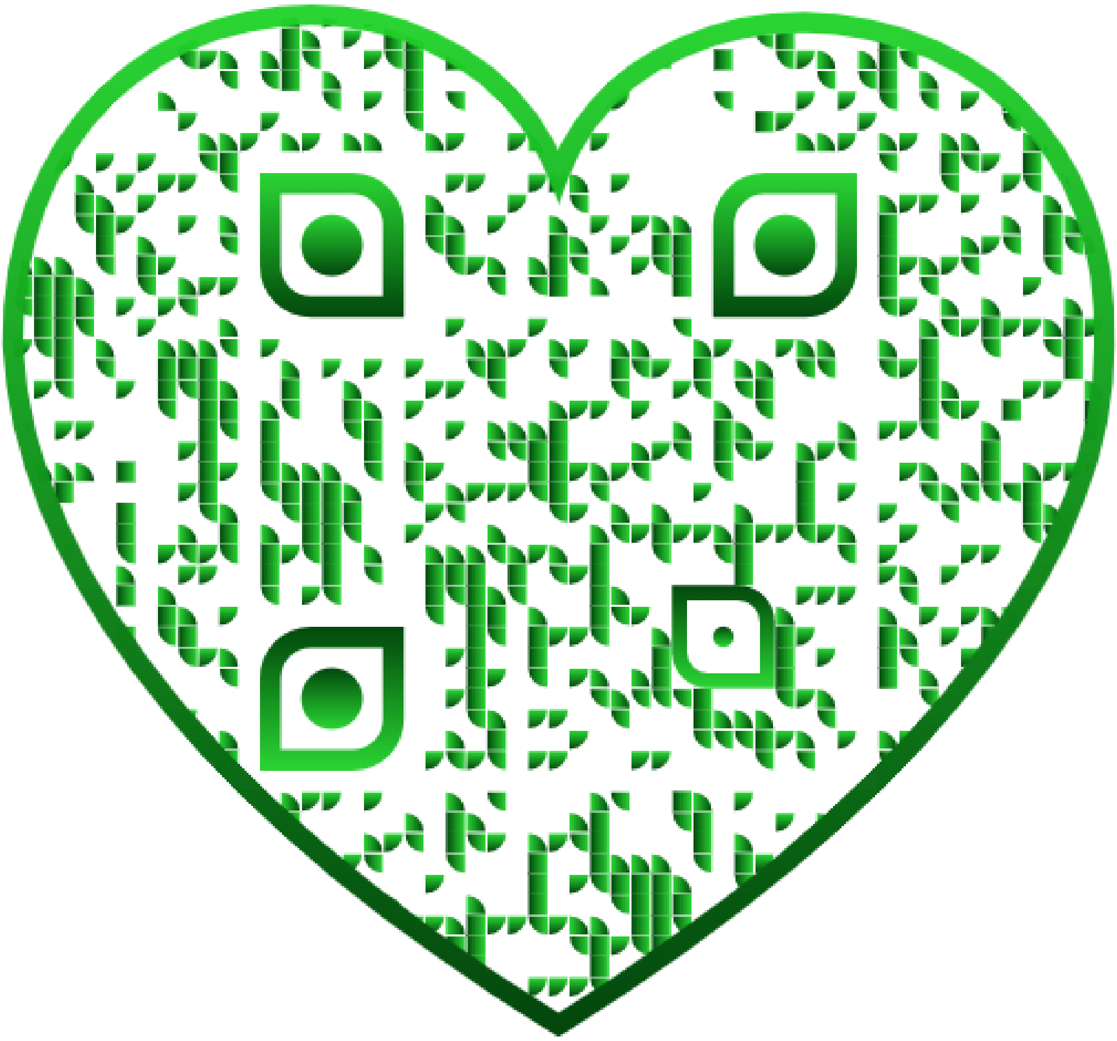
SPORTAGE GOES EV

ROAD TEST: VOLVO'S ULTIMATE SAFE BET

WHAT MAKES US LOVE OUR CARS?

haymarket
15 – 22 October 2025
£4.99
9 771355 829226 42

15 October 2025 | BMW 7 Series



Autocar
THE LIGHT FANTASTIC
NEW PORSCHE 928S4
WHAT REALLY MATTERED IN 2018
AUTOCAR
ROAD TEST YEARBOOK
AUDI'S TESLA
BMW's shock supercar
The Autocar
Entirely New Anglia
FORD
DURON BRAKE LININGS
CAR & GENERAL INSURANCE CORPORATION
Christmas Gifts
Round the World by Motor Caravan
SHOCK: NEW KIA BEATS
AUTOCAR
FIRST FOR NEWS AND REVIEWS EVERY WEEK
THEY'VE FIXED IT
NEW GTI REV
Pumped-up hot hatch tops rebel
More power and pace
Why this is the new Fiesta
secret Porsche rival
Big Jimny: the cheap 4x4 you really want
The crazy supercar that's 3D-printed
MORRIS
THE CAR WITH THE LOWEST UPKEEP COSTS
MOTOR UNION INSURANCE CO. LTD.
Autocar
ANCIENT & MODERN
Week ending 4 NOVEMBER 1978
Tested: 1896 Lutzmann
1978 Renault 5 Auto

AUTOCAR ARCHIVE

Get unlimited access to 130 years of searchable archive content

Subscribe today
themagazineshop.com/aca24paa/aca

COMMENT

FERRARI AND VW POISED TO TAKE EVs TO NEXT LEVEL

Ferrari and Volkswagen are two brands that seldom crop up in the same sentence. In fact, they're practically polar opposites in their ethos, brand appeal and customer base.

Two cars that feature in this week's magazine, a VW and a Ferrari, appear to be polar opposites too. The ID Polo, detailed in an insightful interview with Volkswagen R&D boss Kai Grünitz (p50), is the German firm's upcoming proof that electric cars can be accessible – a modern-day people's car, if you like. It's been created to “bring back a real Volkswagen”, with a focus on “design, material, price point, functions”.

Meanwhile, Ferrari's EV (p4) must be the most technologically advanced performance car if it is to succeed while wearing a Prancing Horse badge. The Italian firm hasn't rushed with its EV, claiming it would not make one until there was demand. But the company has now shared more details of the technology that will underpin it and claims it will “combine state-of-the-art technology with superlative performance”.

What ties these two disparate cars together is the intention and innovation behind them. Their target markets couldn't be more different, yet both are cutting-edge machines that must live up to the huge expectations of their badges. If they can achieve that, this will mark a new dawn of electric motoring.

Rachel Burgess, magazine editor
rachel.burgess@haymarket.com

Meanwhile, online...

autocar.co.uk

The wildest Maserati yet

Richard Lane tests the £936,000, 730bhp Maserati with bespoke suspension, a stripped interior and its own air jacks.

Skids in the extreme Renault 5 Turbo 3E

How much fun can a 533bhp EV hatch be? Renault reveals all – and you can smell the rubber from here.

Remember when concept cars were crazy?

Today's concepts tend to be previews of production cars. The concepts in this article? Not so much.

Autocar (ISSN 1355-8293 USPS 25-185) is published weekly by Haymarket Media Group, Bridge House, 69 London Road, Twickenham, TW1 3SP, United Kingdom; haymarket.com; tel +44 (0)20 8267 5000

The US annual subscription price is $190.00. Airfreight and mailing in the US by agent named World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. US postmaster: Send address changes to Autocar, Air Business Ltd, c/o World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Subscription records are maintained at the above address. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

Autocar magazine is also published in Estonia, Greece, India, Japan, Latvia, Korea and Thailand.

Autocar is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). We abide by the Editors' Code of Practice and are committed to upholding the highest standards of journalism. If you think we haven't met those standards and want to make a complaint, contact autocar@haymarket.com. For more information, contact IPSO on 0300 123 2220 or visit www.ipso.co.uk

ipso. Regulated

Haymarket is certified by BSI to environmental standard ISO14001 and energy management standard ISO50001

Recycle

PEFC
PEFC/16-33-795
PEFC Certified
This product is from sustainably managed forests and controlled sources
www.pefc.co.uk

Autocar is a member of the organising committee of Car Of The Year caroftheyear.org

Issues with your mag?
For subscriber issues, call 0344 848 8816. If you can't find a news-stand copy of Autocar in your local area, email autocar@haymarket.com

“His frenzied wonder suggested the electric door had risen to reveal a live tiger” p44

AUTOCAR
Issue 6693 | Volume 326 | No 6

NEWS

Ferrari's first EV and the tech it'll use 4
Wild look for high-tech new S-Class 8
The Teslas that just got cheaper 10
Merc targets 5min recharge for EVs 12
Skoda reveals 174bhp tuned Fabia 14
EV sales rise, thanks to car grant 16

FIRST DRIVES

Toyota C-HR+ 22
Subaru Uncharted 25
Kia EV5 26
DS Nº4 E-Tense and Plug-in Hybrid 28
Leapmotor B10 30

ROAD TESTS

BMW 750e xDrive M Sport 32
Volvo XC60 T8 Ultra 38

FEATURES

Lancia Delta HF Integrale for sale... 44
VW R&D tech boss Kai Grünitz 50
Highlights from UK's Lambo Day 54

LONG-TERMERS

BYD Dolphin Surf 56
Range Rover Evoque 57
Morgan Super 3 58
Mazda CX-80 59

COLUMNS

Jesse Crosse 13
Mark Tisshaw 15
Steve Cropley 17
Matt Prior 18
Damien Smith 19
Testing, testing 43
Why I love... 74

EVERY WEEK

Your Views 20
How to subscribe 42
Lost in the archive 65
Road test results 67

USED CARS

Lamborghini Urus buying guide 60
My car & I 62
Caught in the classifieds 63

44 SOUL TIES AND HOW TO BREAK THEM

54 WHAT HAPPENS IN UK LAMBO HEAVEN

PEXELS

NEWS

GOT A STORY Email our news editor
will.rimell@haymarket.com

FERRARI REVEALS RADICAL TECH BEHIND ITS FIRST EV

New 1000bhp Elettrica will arrive next year with "unique driving thrills"

Ferrari's first electric car will be launched next year with around 1000bhp and rapid acceleration from four motors, new chassis technology and, it is claimed, handling to match the F80 – but bosses say it won't be a supercar.

The four-door four-seater – which will be the Maranello firm's seventh stand-alone model line – is described instead as more of a GT car, positioning it as an indirect successor to the likes of the old V12-engined FF and GTC4 Lusso.

The long-awaited EV – codenamed Elettrica – is being revealed in three different stages, beginning here, with the technical details of the entirely bespoke chassis, radical quad-motor powertrain and huge 122kWh battery. Then in early 2026 Ferrari will reveal the car's official name and interior, before the final unveiling in the middle of the year.

"When you have a lot of innovation, like in the case of the Elettrica, you have to show step by step what is in the car," said CEO Benedetto Vigna.

The new car has been designed in partnership with iPhone designer Jony Ive's agency, LoveFrom. Camouflaged prototypes have given away few details, but it is clear that it will ride higher than a traditional four-door GT and have a rakish, aero-optimised silhouette. No dimensions have been disclosed, either, but previous mules were based on the Maserati Levante, which suggests that it will be around five metres long – similar to the V12-engined Purosangue.

Vigna acknowledged that the market for premium and sporting electric cars is turbulent. But he said now is the right time for Ferrari to launch its first EV – even as rivals including Aston Martin, Bentley and Lamborghini delay their own – because the brand needs to move fast to embrace and develop new technologies, which, he said, is a mandate that was established by company founder Enzo Ferrari in 1947.

"The point is very simple: we have to innovate," said Vigna. "If we do not innovate, we do not

AUTOCAR
IMAGE

Body and chassis are made with 75% recycled aluminium, saving a claimed 6.7 tonnes of CO_2 per car.

deserve to be called a market leader.

“There is a new traction. Yes, this traction is electric. Yes, other people are having problems. But we have to innovate – and we want to show the world that if we master it well, we can deliver unique driving thrills with electric.”

He added that Ferrari believes in “technology neutrality”, which means “it’s possible to harness any technology to delight our client”.

But while the EV has been developed to perform and handle on the same level as Ferrari’s ICE cars, its primary objective is to help the firm “widen the possible client [base] that will enjoy this type of car” – which is one of the reasons, Vigna said firmly, that “this is not a supercar” but rather a more practically minded four-seat GT.

CEO Vigna: “The point is very simple: we have to innovate”

Another reason for producing an electric GT, according to product development boss Gianmaria Fulgenzi, is that this sort of car makes the best use of an EV drivetrain.

He said: “A few years ago, we started a deep research investigation about a new concept for the marque that would represent an addition to our range.

“We believed an electric vehicle would be the ideal addition for the specification we had in mind in terms of driving traits, on-board space and visibility, and which could appeal to clients who would not usually think about buying a Ferrari.”

Fulgenzi explained that if Ferrari electrified a two-seater, “the overall improvement in performance and usability would be really modest – not enough to justify the offset in overall weight”.

Elettrica is an indirect successor to the GTC4 Lusso (pictured) and FF

He added: “Electric technology would not be at all competitive for a two-seater concept, even [with] an incredible output in terms of horsepower.”

By contrast, a “more versatile” model like the Elettrica can benefit in terms of dynamics, visibility and comfort “compared to an equivalent ICE version”.

But regardless of the car’s shape, size and positioning, Fulgenzi stressed that driver engagement and capable dynamics were priorities of its development. “It is an electric car, but first and foremost – conceptually and in practice – it is a Ferrari,” he said.

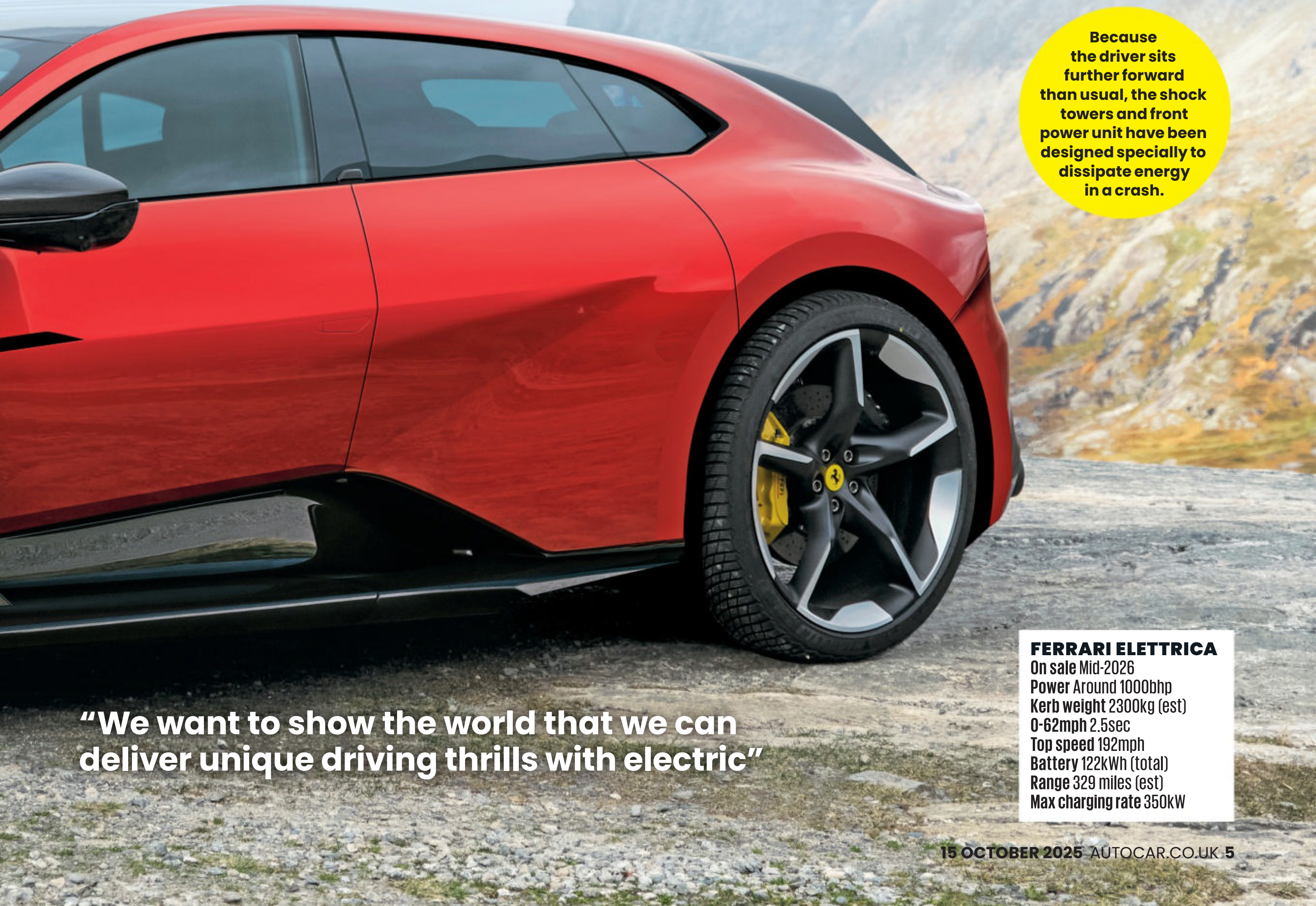
AN EV PLATFORM LIKE NO OTHER

Ferrari’s electric car platform – as yet unconfirmed to underpin any other models – is described as having minimal overhangs, an “extremely short” wheelbase and a layout inspired by Ferrari’s mid-rear-engined berlinetta (coupé) models.

A defining characteristic of this format is a driving position sited close to the front axle, which, said Ferrari, will mean the 2300kg Elettrica offers “the purest dynamic feedback while also facilitating accessibility and maximising comfort” – comparable to its GT cars.

Integrated into the floorpan under the seats is the battery, which with a total capacity of 122kWh will be among the largest of any EV sold in the UK – and one of the fastest-charging, with a peak speed of 350kW enabled by its 880V wiring.

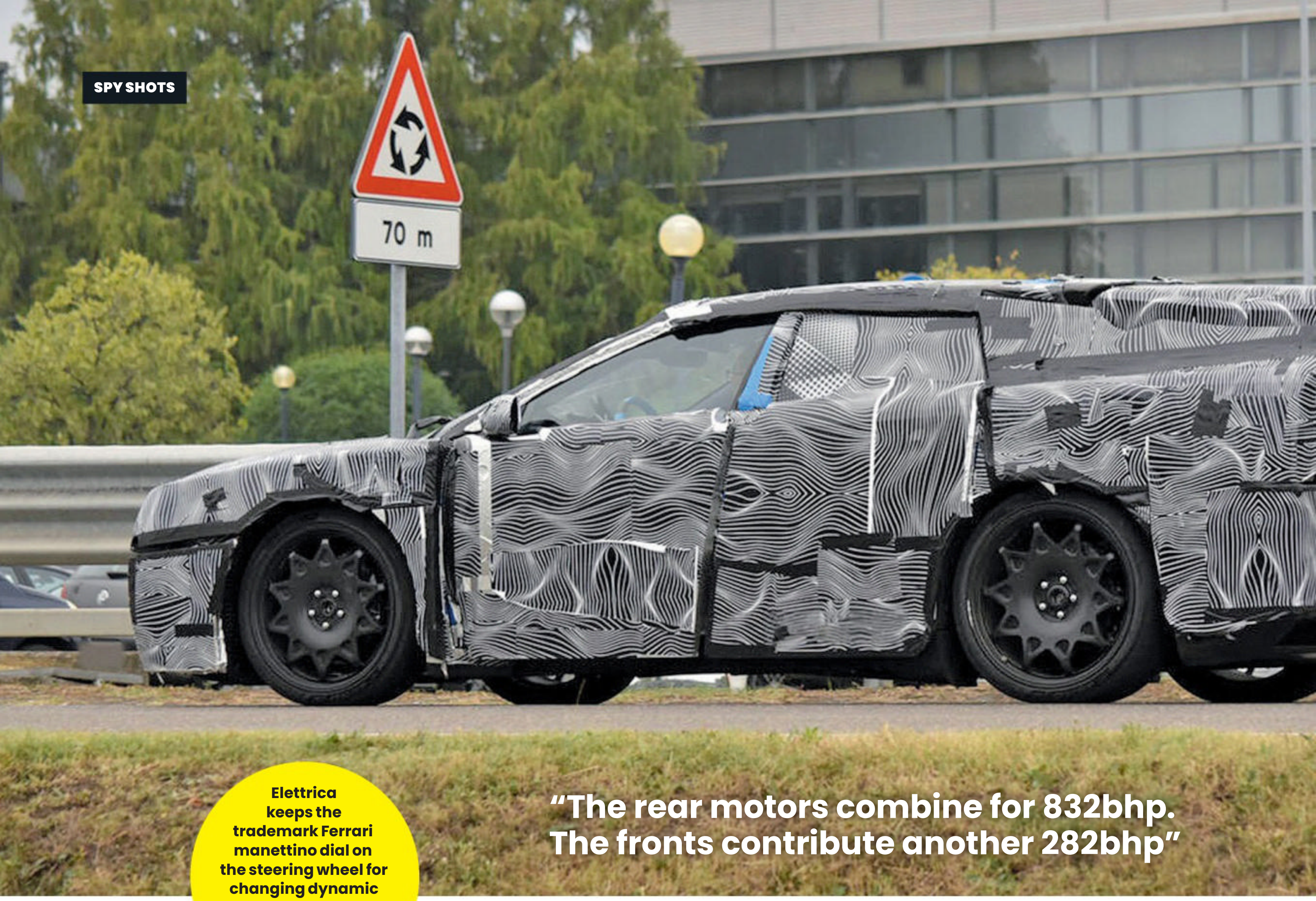
However, because the engineering focus was on ▸



Because the driver sits further forward than usual, the shock towers and front power unit have been designed specially to dissipate energy in a crash.

“We want to show the world that we can deliver unique driving thrills with electric”

FERRARI ELETTRICA
On sale Mid-2026
Power Around 1000bhp
Kerb weight 2300kg (est)
0-62mph 2.5sec
Top speed 192mph
Battery 122kWh (total)
Range 329 miles (est)
Max charging rate 350kW



“The rear motors combine for 832bhp. The fronts contribute another 282bhp”

Elettrica keeps the trademark Ferrari manettino dial on the steering wheel for changing dynamic settings, but also adds a new ‘eManettino’ for the powertrain modes.

◄ maximising performance and driver engagement on a repeatable basis, rather than achieving an outright distance record, the range is claimed to be around 329 miles. That is competitive for a high-output, four-wheel-drive EV but remains some way short of the market’s longest-legged EVs.

Unusually, it features 13 modules in a single layer under the floor and another two on top, beneath the rear seats. This format helped Ferrari to keep the wheelbase as short as possible without denting battery capacity while also optimising weight distribution, contributing to a 47:53 split front to rear.

Ferrari also claims that the arrangement – with 85% of the battery mass concentrated under the floor – gives the Elettrica a centre of gravity that’s 80mm lower “than an equivalent ICE model”.

The battery itself is designed and assembled entirely in Maranello from cells supplied by South Korean firm SK On. It is said to have an energy density of 195Wh/kg, which, claims Ferrari, is “the highest of any electric car” on sale.

HOW FERRARI REPLACES ENGINES

The battery sends its power to a quartet of motors, one for each wheel, which combine to give more power than any road-going Ferrari to date and a torque output that’s several times higher than that of most road-going cars.

The rear motors produce 416bhp apiece, combining for 832bhp, while the fronts contribute another 282bhp. Ferrari has not given an official combined figure, but it will be one of the most powerful cars the company has yet built.

The firm does say that the system gives around 1000bhp under full throttle, which is enough for a 0-62mph time of 2.5sec (just 0.3sec slower than the F80, a dedicated hypercar) and a top speed of 192mph.

Ferrari also claims that the front axle can send up to 2580lb ft of torque to the road, while the rear produces an incredible 5900lb ft after the gearboxes have multiplied the output from the motors themselves, which can go from stationary to their 25,000rpm top speed in less than a second.

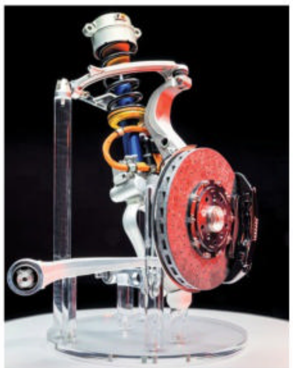
The quad-motor arrangement allows for full torque vectoring to all four corners, maximising agility and stability, while the front motors can be disconnected (in just half a second) when not in use to make the car purely rear-wheel drive – at a high-speed cruise, for example, to boost efficiency.

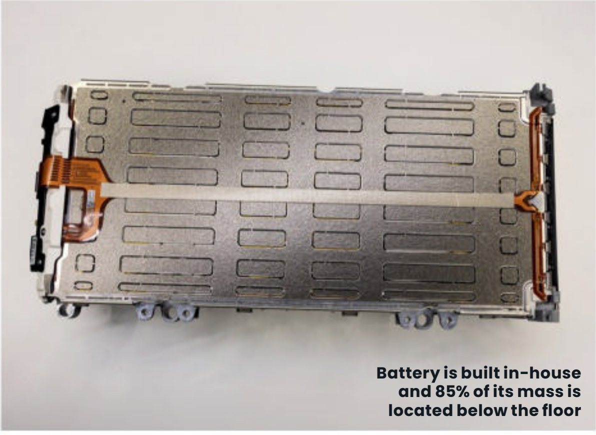
The motors are housed in e-axle units developed and built entirely in-house. Even the casings are made in Ferrari’s own foundry to ensure “impeccable build quality, allowing the company to keep the entire production process under tight control”.

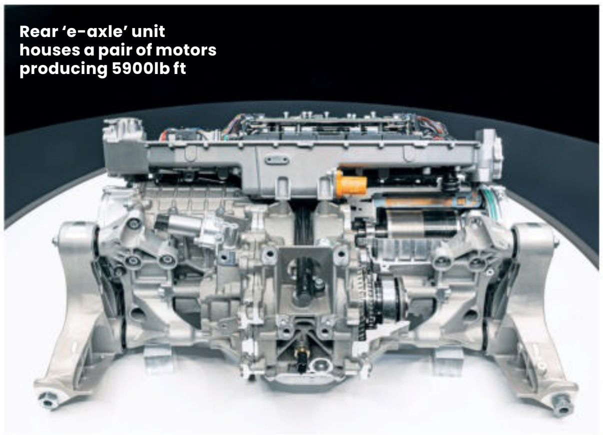
They use the same Halbach array set-up as that in the F80’s electric motors, wherein the magnets are all arranged with their polarity facing in different directions. This enables nearly all of the magnetism to be concentrated on one side of the rotor, facing the stator, avoiding any power-sapping energy losses.

SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

A keen focus on refinement is cited as one of the main reasons that the Elettrica is the first Ferrari road car to have a separate subframe at the rear – a set-up that allows engineers to better


New EV uses highly advanced semi-active suspension


Battery is built in-house and 85% of its mass is located below the floor



Rear 'e-axle' unit houses a pair of motors producing 5900lb ft

isolate road noise and powertrain vibrations from the cabin.

The largest single-piece hollow casting Ferrari has yet produced, this structure suspends the rear e-axle, active suspension and four-wheel steering system from the car by way of elastomeric bushings, which are said to give the same level of dynamic rigidity as a chassis without a subframe while also minimising noise and harshness.

The Elettrica is aided in this endeavour by its 48V semi-active suspension system, which has been evolved from the set-up used by the Purosangue. It comprises a motorised damper on each corner that moves up and down on a threaded screw in response to dynamic load and changes in surface.

The system is controlled by a central computer, which measures all dynamic parameters across the chassis 200 times per second and responds accordingly. It can firm up the outside dampers in a tight corner, for example, to keep the body flat, and pushes each wheel down into surface undulations to maintain contact with the road and eliminate rebound.

The coil springs are thus redundant while driving and serve only to keep the body from resting on the ground when the car is switched off – otherwise the motors in the dampers would have to be powered up at all times.

With this highly advanced part-active suspension, four-wheel steering (up to 2.15deg at the back) and full torque vectoring, this is the first Ferrari to offer "control over vertical, longitudinal and lateral forces in all dynamic conditions", said the company.

The result, said Fulgenzi, is that "the wheels are like four spheres" – capable of being moved in any direction at any time independently of one another.

A BEV YOU'LL LOVE TO REV

Ferrari's commitment to ensuring its EV is as engaging as its ICE sports cars extends to an innovative harmonics system that it has created to provide a soundtrack for the powertrain on the move.

Rather than synthesise an engine note and pump it into the cabin, or artificially enhance the whirring and whining of the motors, Ferrari has developed a high-precision sensor that picks up the vibrations of the mechanical components and amplifies them, like a pick-up on an electric guitar.

The result, said Ferrari, is "an authentic aural experience that reflects the dynamic driving experience" – but it is only heard when "functionally useful" to provide feedback and enhance certain physical sensations. At a 70mph motorway cruise, for example, it will remain silent.

"The sound of our electric Ferrari is not fake – not fake at all," said Fulgenzi, emphasising the importance of authentic means of boosting engagement.

There is also a dedicated Ferrari Order Noise Cancellation system (FONC), which monitors and "selectively cancels undesirable current harmonics that are produced by the motors", such as high-pitched whines, to boost refinement on the move.

Elettrica still has 'shift paddles', but rather than changing gears, the left adjusts the brake regen and the right changes the level of available power.

WHY HAS IT 'ONLY' GOT 1000BHP?

When the Bugatti Veyron was launched in 2005, its 1001bhp made it the world's most powerful car, but the rapid proliferation of electric supercars and hypercars means Ferrari's similarly endowed EV is outgunned by many different types of car.

The Rimac Nevera and Lotus Evija nudge 2000bhp, while Chinese firm Xiaomi has a sports saloon with more than 1500bhp. Yangwang's U9 Xtreme hypercar, the world's fastest road car, has 2977bhp.

But Ferrari product development boss Gianmaria Fulgenzi said the firm never intended to join the power war – but rather it aimed to make sure its first EV was engaging to drive, as well as seriously quick.

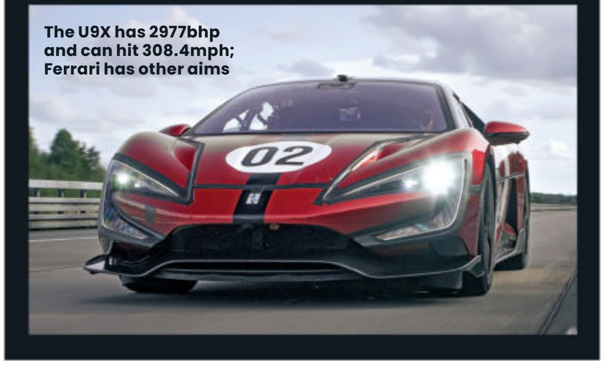
"Of course, you can see in the market some cars that already have 2000hp," he said. "It's very easy and simple to create power in an electric engine. It's not difficult. It's not an internal combustion engine.

"But where is the joke?" he asked, questioning the level of fun involved in driving a mega-power EV. "What do you feel when you drive these kinds of cars? They are elephants – you need very big [motors] and a very big battery."

Fulgenzi said Ferrari, by contrast, "wanted to create a car that performed, but performed every day.

"We don't want the customer to keep the car in the garage and only 'own' it. The car must be driven daily," he said.

So the Elettrica instead "features exactly the power – and the time to release the power, the brakes, dimensions, weight and weight distribution – that it deserves for this number of seats and doors".



The U9X has 2977bhp and can hit 308.4mph; Ferrari has other aims

POTENTIAL BUYERS KEPT IN THE LOOP

Ferrari will not restrict production numbers of its first EV, but rather will let volumes be determined by its price – which it will announce when the car is revealed. "It is a range car," said Vigna, rather than a limited-edition model.

Vigna told Autocar that while the EV is primarily aimed at attracting new customers to Ferrari, there are collectors of the brand's cars who "trust us a lot" to "deliver unique emotions because of vehicle dynamics" in an EV.

"We have been talking with several of them and the message is clear: if the car does what we believe it does, it will have a good acceptance with our clients," he said.

"More intense discussions" with potential customers will get under way in the first quarter of 2026, he added, without committing to a date for order books opening or the first deliveries, saying only that the wraps will come off the final car in the first half of the year.

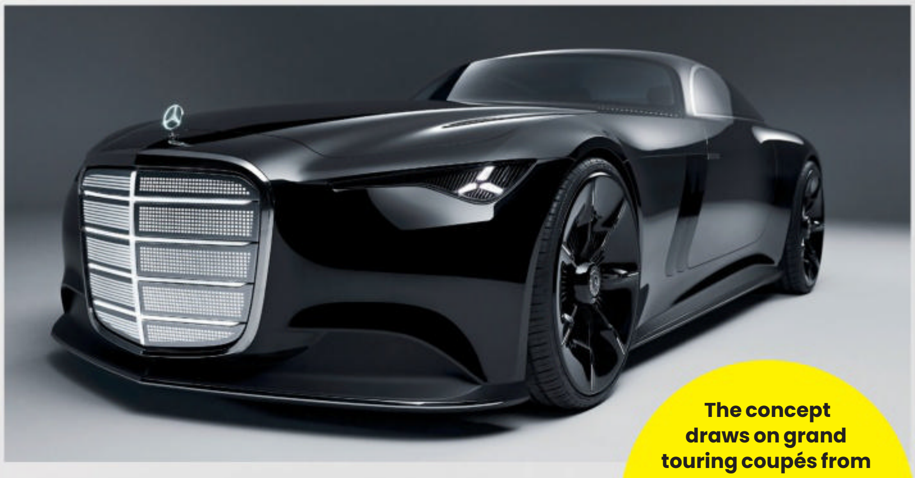
FELIX PAGE

Beneath the heavy disguise is a sleek four-door roughly 5.0m long

OFFICIAL PICTURES

RETRO-INSPIRED VISION ICONIC PREVIEWS S-CLASS

New limo to inherit concept's bold grille design and steer-by-wire tech



The concept draws on grand touring coupés from the 1930s, notably the distinctive cab-back profile, long clamshell bonnet and rear-hinged, frameless doors.

Mercedes-Benz has revealed the Vision Iconic, a luxury coupé concept with a bold art deco-inspired design that both previews the next S-Class and hints at the return of a two-door coupé and drop-top to the line-up.

The flamboyant concept also showcases some of the brand's most advanced future technologies, including a hands-off, eyes-off autonomous system and steer-by-wire.

Unveiled at the brand's design house in Shanghai, China, the new concept provides the first look at the future face of the S-Class, due in the UK in 2028.

The concept features a unique five-slat version of Mercedes' illuminated 'Iconic Grille' that was first seen on the new GLC EV. The panel is larger and more upright than on the current S-Class, and is a reinterpretation of the classic grille design that dates back to the 1900 Mercedes 35 PS.

Vision Iconic's styling was inspired in part by the 300 SL

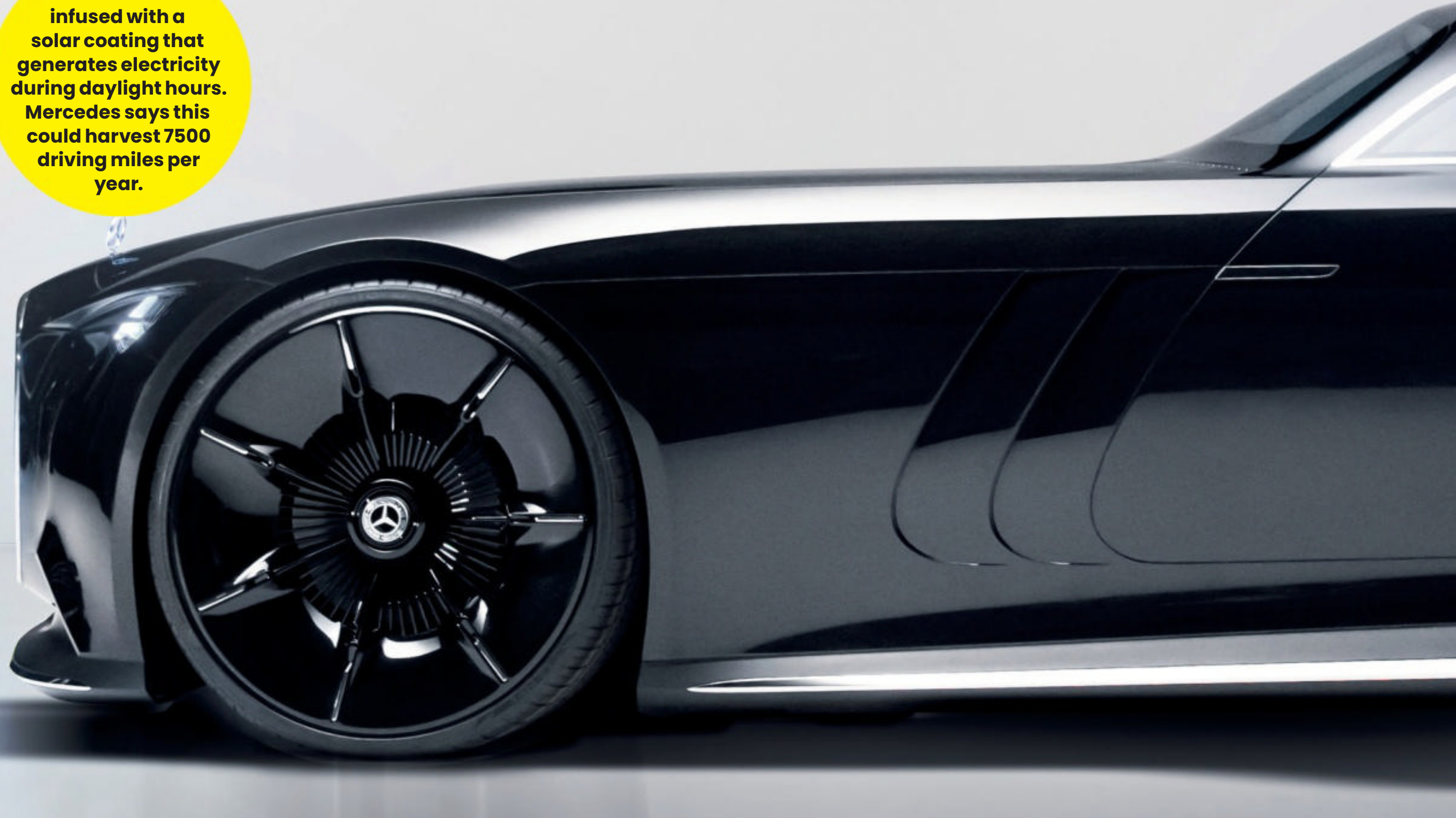
Like the upcoming C-Class, the eighth-generation S-Class will be launched exclusively as an MEB.EA-platform-based EV, with a heavily facelifted version of the current-generation MRA-based S-Class arriving soon after as part of an effort to extend the life of combustion-engined cars in the most cost-effective way possible.

In contrast to today's range, both versions will share identical designs in a move to unify model lines regardless of powertrain. They will also share a name, with the EQS badge being axed as Mercedes abandons dedicated model names for its EVs.

The S-Class could be the first Mercedes to sport an illuminated three-pointed star, a key element of the concept's front end.

Speaking to Autocar, Mercedes design boss Gorden Wagener said the concept was inspired by "the golden era of automotive design of the

Paint is infused with a solar coating that generates electricity during daylight hours. Mercedes says this could harvest 7500 driving miles per year.



Radical cabin features wide front seats, a large, thin steering wheel and digital and physical controls. Lavish materials include blue velvet and patterned veneers.

Shapely rear and prominent haunches are reminiscent of the 300 SL. Boat-tail links to earlier Maybach 6 concept.

1930s", blending classic elements from some of Mercedes' most celebrated models. He added that the radical interior is "lounge first, driver second".

The Vision Iconic is also the strongest signal yet that Mercedes-Benz is considering a return of the S-Class coupé and cabriolet to its line-up. The flagship two-door models, a mainstay of the Mercedes-Benz line-up for more than 60 years, were discontinued in 2021 as part of a streamlining of the company's range.

However, insiders now suggest they could return as part of a push to introduce more low-volume, high-margin models, which could pave the way for a return of the pair later in the decade.

The Vision Iconic receives a suite of new automotive technologies that are still being developed, including level-four autonomous driving for hands-off, eyes-off driving. Mercedes offers its level-three (eyes-on) Drive Pilot system in its current S-Class.

This level-four system features a new 'neuromorphic' computer system that is claimed to mimic the human brain's neural networks. It is said to make driving calculations up to 10 times faster and be 90% more energy-efficient than the Drive Pilot system.

The concept also showcases a new steer-by-wire system, which has already been confirmed for use by the next S-Class. When combined with a reworked version of the existing models' rear-axle steering, it is claimed to increase agility and low-speed manoeuvrability.
GREG KABLE

"The concept is a strong signal that the S-Class coupé could return"

Model Y Standard drops entry price in US by approximately £3725

OFFICIAL PICTURES

PRICE-LED NEW TESLAS RUSHED IN TO LIFT SALES

New stripped-back Model Y and Model 3 variants slash entry price

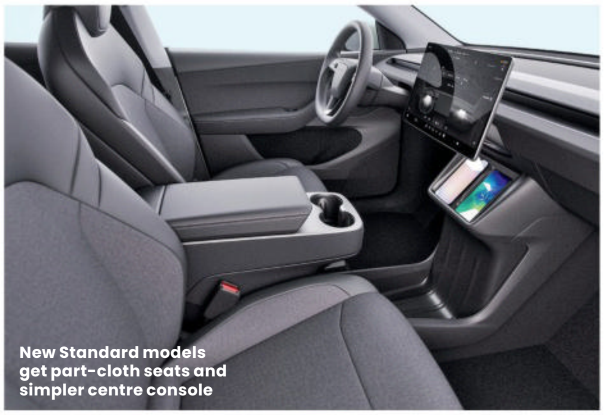
Tesla has launched the Model Y Standard and Model 3 Standard, two new entry-level variants created to boost sales following the brand's worst period to date.

Launched in the US – with other markets, such as the UK, understood to follow soon – the Y Standard is priced at $39,990, $5000 cheaper than the rest of the range, and the 3 Standard is $36,990, $5500 cheaper.

The pair are claimed to be the most efficient Tesla models yet. Each offers a range of up to 321 miles on the US's strict EPA testing cycle, which translates to around 360 miles on Europe's WLTP test.

Tesla doesn't divulge precise battery capacities but the Standard is likely to use the same 60kWh pack as the Rear-Wheel Drive models sold in the UK and mainland Europe, which have WLTP ranges of 311 miles for the Model Y and 323 miles for the Model 3.

The increase in range has been achieved by what Tesla calls a "distinctive" new design that also marks them out from the rest of their respective ranges.



New Standard models get part-cloth seats and simpler centre console

In an effort to cut costs, the Standard models have a more stripped-back feel inside. Faux leather is replaced by part-cloth seating and the full-length centre console is essentially cut in half to create a similar open area to that found in the Cybertruck.

No physical key is offered. Instead, owners access the cars via their smartphones.

Tech-wise, the Standard models are similar to the rest of the Model Y and Model 3 ranges. They get the same 15.4in central touchscreen (which continues to control all of the car's main features), remote climate control capabilities and Tesla's variable cruise control system, Autopilot.

Autocar understands that Tesla plans to launch the Standard models in other regions – including the UK and mainland Europe – given the company's need to turn around its sales slump in key markets such as China, previously one of its most significant.

The Standard models will initially be built in the US. Other markets don't get US-built Teslas, so for the car to be sold in Europe, production would need to be expanded to either Berlin, Germany, or Shanghai, China. Both factories already build both the Model Y and Model 3. But Shanghai is unlikely to

UK TO GET HOT FORMENTOR

Cupra will launch the 385bhp five-cylinder Formentor VZ5 in the UK, having previously snubbed right-hand-drive markets. Prices for the performance SUV are expected to start at around £60,000.

STELLANTIS REJIGS TOP TIER

Stellantis commercial vehicle boss Emanuele Cappellano has been named its new Europe head. He replaces Jean-Philippe Imparato, who can now "focus full time" on his existing role as Maserati's CEO.

supply Europe, given the EU import tax levied on Chinese-made EVs.

In Europe, the two new Standard models would be likely to replace the current entry-level Rear-Wheel Drive versions, given they occupy similar positions.

The importance of the new models to Tesla is clear after boss Elon Musk said they were created to expand the brand's appeal in the face of significant market headwinds.

This year has been difficult for Tesla. Despite introducing an updated version of the Model Y, it has struggled in its key market of China. Tesla suffered a 13% decline in global sales and a 12% fall in revenue to $22.5 billion (£16.8bn) between April and July.

The firm hopes the new base models will especially help to incentivise sales in the US, where a rollback of emission mandates has resulted in the current $7500 government electric car grants being axed, prompting interest in EVs to dip in the US.

Tesla's 2025 third-quarter earnings will be revealed on 22 October. The firm hopes to report a slight financial improvement compared with the second quarter, given deliveries were up by 115,000 cars globally.

To prevent a further decline in sales from 2024's figure (itself a drop from 2023), Tesla's fourth quarter will need to be its strongest of the year – and these new entry-level EVs could prove key to hitting that target.

WILL RIMELL

LONGER RANGE FOR MODEL 3 AND MODEL Y

In the UK, Tesla has increased the driving range of the Model 3 and Model Y in an effort to keep pace with newer, more long-legged rivals.

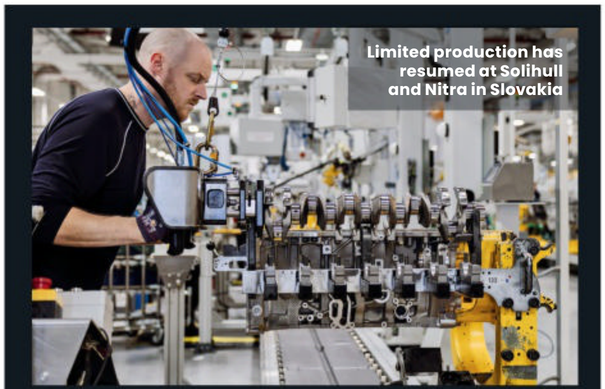
The extra range has been achieved by fitting an upgraded battery pack that now features high-density cells.

In their most efficient guises, this means a range of 466 miles for the Model 3 Long Range Rear-Wheel Drive, up 36 miles on before, and 390 miles for the Model Y Long Range All-Wheel Drive, an increase of 26 miles.

For the Model 3, the range boost is accompanied by a light interior update, including the reintroduction of an indicator stalk.

Current Model 3 gains upgraded battery pack for up to 466-mile range

New Model 3 Standard gains revised bodywork that boosts efficiency



Limited production has resumed at Solihull and Nitra in Slovakia

JLR PRODUCTION RESTARTS AFTER SIX-WEEK PAUSE

JLR finally restarted car production last week, almost six weeks after plants were shut down following a cyber attack that incapacitated its entire global business.

The cyber attack on 1 September brought all of JLR's factories to a halt and forced the company to shut down its internal computer systems in an effort to prevent data from being stolen.

As well as resulting in production shutdowns at all of its global plants, this created issues with parts ordering and stifled retailer activity.

The resumption of production started last week with the Land Rover Defender and Land Rover Discovery lines at Nitra, Slovakia, and the Range Rover and Range Rover Sport lines at Solihull.

A restart date for car production at Halewood is currently unknown but at the time of writing (10 October) JLR said further updates "will follow".

Halewood builds the Range Rover Evoque and Land Rover Discovery Sport and is being transformed as part of a £500 million project to produce JLR's future EVs.

Production has restarted initially in restricted form. A date for returning to full capacity has yet to be confirmed.

Work at the Wolverhampton engine plant, Birmingham battery centre and stamping operations in Castle Bromwich, Halewood and Solihull also resumed last week.

The consequence of the cyber attack is estimated to have cost JLR a £1.5 billion drop in revenue.

Figures released by the firm last week show that in a three-month period including the September shutdown, sales to dealers fell by nearly a quarter to 66,165.

The drop represents the loss of 21,138 cars compared with the same period in 2024.

Sales to customers by dealers were higher, at 85,495, as dealers were able to offload their inventory, but that also represented a drop of 17% in the quarter due to cyber attack issues.

UK sales took a bigger hit than other global markets as the factory shutdowns filtered through to dealers earlier, with UK retail sales down 32% for the three months.

"It has been a challenging quarter for JLR," said outgoing CEO Adrian Mardell, but sales in July and August had been "in line with our expectations" before the cyber attack.

JLR will present its second-quarter financial report in November.

NEW TWINGO WEEKS AWAY

Renault will reveal the new Twingo on 6 November. Order books for the electric city car will open later this month, with prices expected to start under £17,000. It will go toe to toe with the incoming VW ID 1.

SUZUKI'S MINI GREENHOUSE

Suzuki has revealed the Vision e-Sky concept to preview a tiny electric kei car for Japan. It has a range of 168 miles, a surprisingly spacious cabin, a full-sized touchscreen and a pot plant on the dash.

MERCEDES TARGETS CHARGE TIMES TO DRIVE EV TAKE-UP

Five-minute recharge possible as ELF project pushes tech boundaries

Mercedes-Benz is targeting one of the final barriers to what it sees as the widespread adoption of electric cars by making the time it takes to recharge as quick and convenient as filling up at a fuel station.

Central to this objective is an advanced rolling laboratory known as the Experimental-Lade-Fahrzeug – German for Experimental Charging Vehicle – or ELF for short. Based on a V-Class, it has five different charging ports and serves as a fully mobile research hub designed to explore the outer limits of charging technology, from extreme electrical energy transfer and battery cooling to bidirectional energy flow, automated inductive and conductive charging, solar charging and more.

Increased charging speeds is becoming the main focus for Mercedes as it believes the challenge of battery range has already been largely overcome. Its latest electric models, such as the third-generation CLA saloon, now go close to 500 miles, a figure that puts them within striking distance of long-geared diesel-engined cars for outright range.

"The next battle is about convenience," said Malte Sievers, Mercedes-Benz's head of charging development. "Customers want charging to be as quick, seamless and effortless as refuelling. That's where our work with ELF is focused."

GREG KABLE

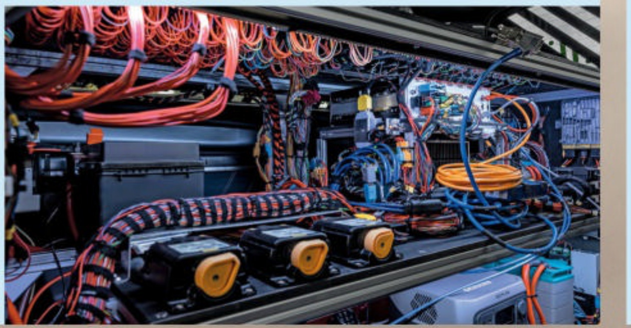
A SOLAR RANGE EXTENDER

One of the developments used by Mercedes-Benz's ELF research vehicle is a photovoltaic roof, which consists of monocrystalline silicon cells that feed power to the battery. While not intended as a primary charging source, it can add up to 19 miles of range per day under ideal sunny conditions – sufficient, said Sievers, to offset typical standby power loss or slowly build range while the car is parked. It is similar to the system that was used by the Fisker Ocean.

CCS 1000A
Mercedes-Benz
ELF
UNDERBODY CONNECTION DEVICE

CHARGING THAT POWERS MORE THAN THE CAR

Bidirectional charging enables an EV to supply power to a home or outdoor appliances or feed the grid. The ELF project has helped create MB.Charge Home – a wallbox that allows EVs to be used as a home power storage. Annual bills could be cut by around £435, it predicts.



PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF CHARGING SPEED

ELF has a dual-port Combined Charging System (CCS) and a Megawatt Charging System (MCS). The CCS pushes production-ready components to their limits – ELF is capable of hitting up to 900kW, which is enough to add 100kWh of electricity in 10 minutes. MCS subjects the battery to loads above 1000kW to test thermal resilience.

TECHNOLOGY MOVING FROM LAB TO ROAD

Developments tested on ELF are already influencing Mercedes production cars. Research from its dual CCS/MCS system directly influenced the charging architecture of the Mercedes-AMG GT XX concept, which achieved peak charging power of 1041kW during a record-setting endurance run at the Nardò test track in Italy in August.

'SNACK CHARGING' VIA AN INDUCTIVE SYSTEM

The ELF is being used to develop a range of future charging methods, such as an inductive system that is capable of transferring 11kW wirelessly via an electromagnetic field between ground-based and on-board coils. This is similar to that offered on the new Porsche Cayenne and is ideal for what Sievers calls "snack charging" during short stops.

BUILDING AN ENERGY ECOSYSTEM

Mercedes' ambition extends beyond charging speed. It is developing a system to allow owners to earn credits if they feed power back to the grid, which would help grid stability during peak demand, says Mercedes. Credits could be used for discounted charging. The aim is to turn Mercedes EVs into portable, flexible energy banks.

SOLAR ROOF
LAB INSIDE
F
2025

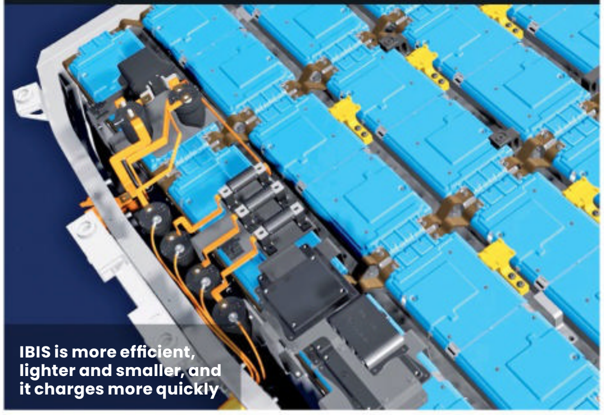
THE FIVE-MINUTE STOP IS IN SIGHT

All of these developments tie directly into Mercedes' expanding global charging network, which aims to make DC fast-charging as accessible as petrol refuelling. Lessons learned from the ELF project are already shaping the EV charging technology of the future – as seen with the GT XX concept.

Sievers said this makes the once far-fetched idea of a five-minute charging stop and 500-mile refill – or 100 miles a minute – a realistic prospect for electric production models before the end of the decade.

Next big thing

JESSE CROSSE



IBIS is more efficient, lighter and smaller, and it charges more quickly

INTEGRATION IS KEY TO NEW STELLANTIS BATTERY TECH

STELLANTIS AND FRENCH battery maker SAFT have revealed an integrated battery system that is more efficient, smaller and lighter and cuts charging times by 15%. Called IBIS (Intelligent Battery Integrated System), the battery incorporates the inverter and charger functions directly into its pack, creating a single module to deliver power to the drive motor-generator.

Until now, inverters – a key EV component that manages both power and the transition between AC and DC current between battery and motor-generator or battery and charger – have either been a stand-alone element or integrated with drive motors. Likewise, on-board chargers are normally individual components. IBIS works with any type of battery chemistry or in any application, from EVs to stationary systems.

After years of work, an IBIS-equipped battery is now up and running in a Peugeot e-3008, which is built on the STLA Medium platform. The IBIS architecture deals with the AC and DC aspects of running an EV and can supply energy to the grid as well as to the drive motor. It also handles the voltage step-down to the conventional 12V battery and electrical system.

What should we notice as drivers of an IBIS-equipped car? Stellantis says there's a 10% efficiency improvement based on the WLTP cycle and a 15% power gain from 150kW to 172kW in a direct comparison with a conventional EV high-voltage battery. Because the major high-voltage components are integrated into one, weight will be reduced by 40kg, and IBIS liberates 17 litres of space. Charging will be faster, too, dropping from seven hours to six on a 7kW domestic AC charger, together with a 10% energy saving making charging less expensive. Second-life battery use, either in vehicles or stationary applications, should also become more feasible by integrating the key electronic components in one package.

Elsewhere in battery development, Shell Lubricants has developed a high-performance EV battery thermal management fluid, which it says will reduce charging times significantly without compromising battery safety or life. Developed with the RML Group, 'Shell EV-Plus Thermal Fluid' is produced using gas-to-liquids technology. The fluid is non-conductive (dielectric), and electrical components like cells are immersed directly in it, which is more effective than indirect cooling via cooling plates or tubes carrying coolant. A 34kWh battery pack using the fluid has been charged from 10% to 80% in under 10 minutes, because the cells are able to handle much higher charge currents.

IBIS is being trialled in a Peugeot e-3008

HOT SPECIAL FABIA BOOSTED TO 174BHP

Skoda celebrates 130 years with its fastest Fabia yet

OFFICIAL PICTURES

Fabia 130's 1.5 TSI engine has been tuned to deliver a 0-62mph time of 7.4sec

Skoda has souped up the Fabia to create the fastest variant of the supermini yet.

With a top speed of 142mph thanks to a power output of 174bhp, the Fabia 130 has been created to mark Skoda's 130th anniversary. The nameplate also pays tribute to the 130 RS, one of Skoda's most successful motorsport entries – and one of its most famous, given that it was the first to claim a class win at the Monte Carlo Rally, in 1977.

The extra 27bhp over the standard Fabia has been achieved through a reworking of the supermini's turbocharged 1.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine. The unit has also been tuned to deliver its full 174bhp between 5750rpm and 6000rpm. Peak torque is unchanged at 184lb ft.

As part of the upgrades, the engine receives a new intake plenum, vibration dampers and rocker arms.

In addition to the increase in power, the Fabia 130 has a bespoke software map for its dual-clutch automatic gearbox, allowing it to hold gears for longer and enable quicker downchanges when Sport mode is selected. As with the regular Fabia, power is sent exclusively to the front wheels.

These changes result in a 0-62mph time of 7.4sec, which is an improvement of 0.6sec compared with the Fabia Monte Carlo – the previous range-topper, which used the standard version of the 1.5-litre TSI engine. That speed almost matches the Mk2 Fabia vRS, which was capable of completing the benchmark sprint in 7.3sec.

The Fabia 130 will eventually catch up, however, because its top speed of 142mph improves on that of the old Fabia vRS by 3mph, making it the fastest Fabia ever built.

While warmed up, it is still less powerful than its similarly priced Volkswagen Polo GTI rival, which has a 204bhp 2.0-litre turbo petrol four and can hit 149mph.

To showcase its performance credentials, the Fabia 130 gets the sportier suspension set-up from the Fabia Monte Carlo, so it rides 15mm lower than the standard Fabia models. Its electric power steering has also been fettled to provide more feedback.

The exterior is marked out by a special front splitter, 18in alloy wheels and twin exhaust pipes, plus '130' graphics. Inside, it gets electrically adjustable bucket seats and stainless-steel pedals.

Order books will open on 30 October, with prices starting at £29,995 – £3040 more than the Fabia Monte Carlo and £1420 cheaper than the Polo GTI.

CHARLIE MARTIN

Special graphics, 18in alloys and lower, sportier suspension also feature

Skoda 130 RS won its class in the 1977 Monte Carlo Rally

CAR FINANCE CUSTOMERS IN LINE FOR £700 PAYOUT

AN ESTIMATED 14 million motorists in the UK could each receive around £700 in compensation for being mis-sold car finance, according to regulators.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has proposed an industry-wide scheme to compensate buyers who took out unfair car finance agreements from April 2007 until November 2024.

Based on the number of consumers estimated to be eligible for the scheme, lenders could pay out a total of £8.2 billion in compensation.

The scheme would be free to access for consumers affected and much simpler to navigate than having to submit an individual claim.

The £700 figure is less than earlier estimates by the FCA, which suggested payments could be closer to £950.

The car finance scandal centres on salespeople being incentivised to charge higher interest rates without the knowledge of buyers in order to pot an increased commission.

The FCA's proposed compensation scheme comes after a Supreme Court ruling on car finance mis-selling in August. While the courts ruled against several cases, it said that in some circumstances the value of a commission for selling a finance deal and how it was disclosed pointed to an unfair relationship between banks and car dealers, which is illegal under the Consumer Credit Act.

FCA CEO Nikhil Rathi said the legal clarity means it is now time for customers to get fair compensation. He added: "Our scheme aims to be simple to use and for lenders to implement."

Rathi said there would be "a range of views" on the specifics of the scheme, including its scope and how compensation was calculated, adding: "Not everyone will get everything they would like. But we want to work on the best possible scheme and draw a line under this issue quickly."

Some dealers profited by charging higher interest rates on finance deals

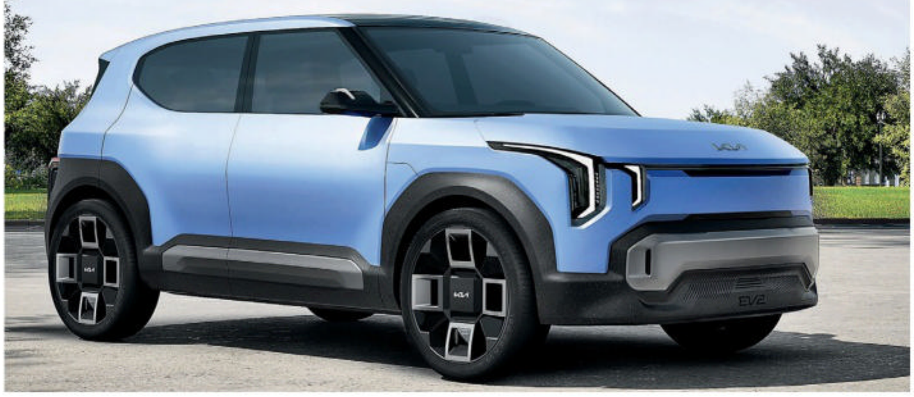
EV2 TO LEAD KIA'S EUROPE SALES PUSH

The Kia EV2 will arrive early next year as an important next step towards growing electric vehicle sales in Europe, Kia boss Ho Sung Song has said. The new small SUV, previewed earlier this year, is set to be priced from around £25,000 and will rival the Renault 4 and Ford Puma Gen-E. It will be built in Kia's Slovakia plant, where it will replace the Ceed.

While Song described the EV2 as a "global car", it is primarily "a car for Europe". The production run for the EV2 will be around 100,000 cars per year, which Song said was the minimum required to establish a profitable and sustainable supply chain.

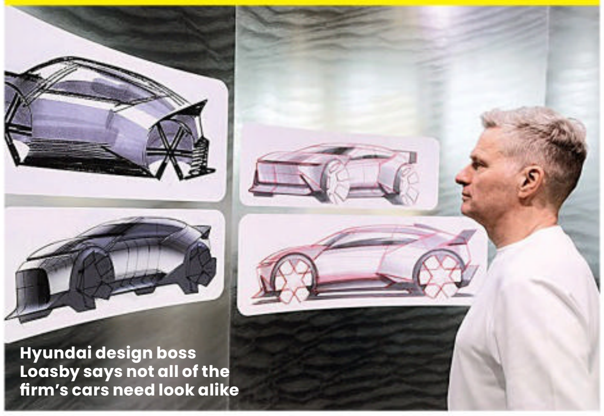
Kia hasn't said where the EV2 will be sold, but it won't be offered in Korea or probably the US, where it is deemed too small for customers. That makes Europe its key market.

Song said the EV2, which arrives shortly after EV5 SUV, completes Kia's EV line-up for now, adding: "The EV6, EV9 and EV3 were for early adopters. When the EV2 launches we will have a very serious EV line-up."



Grapevine

MARK TISSHAW


Hyundai design boss Loasby says not all of the firm's cars need look alike

HYUNDAI'S DESIGN STRATEGY is the opposite of the more familiar Russian doll-type approach that scales the same core design up and down across a line-up.

Hyundai Design Centre boss Simon Loasby likens the approach to that of a chess set, where all the pieces on a board look different and serve different purposes, yet they're all part of the same game. He calls it "customer-centric design": you think of the needs of those for whom the car is created rather than trying to produce a bigger or smaller version of the car you just made.

This less orthodox approach requires a strong brand behind it to work, yet so individual and impressive in their own right have some of Hyundai's cars become that the badge can sometimes be forgotten.

Xavier Martinet is coming up to a year in his role as Hyundai's European boss, having moved over from the Renault Group. He is convinced Hyundai has the potential to grow not just in terms of volume but also in terms of brand awareness to make people think about Hyundai again rather than just a model name.

Martinet says the brand is strong enough globally to be ranked 30th overall in the latest Interbrand Best Global Brands report across all sectors – the list is topped by Apple, Microsoft and Google. "But in Europe we are not there yet," he adds. "When people buy a Tucson, they don't buy a Hyundai Tucson, and this is exactly where we want to go. We need to enhance the brand perception in the coming months and years."

Brand-building tactics include the ad campaign about how to pronounce 'Hyundai' along with work with dealers to improve the customer experience in both sales and aftersales. A greater investment in digital tools is allowing for easier and more frequent communication with prospective and current customers, to give them information when they want it. With competition so fierce, they will be able to find a brand that can deliver.

"The products should be great, and the service should be great," says Martinet. The greater brand push will not be at the expense of such divergent designs for future models. Design remains one of the best ways to stand out because "if you're the second preferred vehicle from customers, you're the first one to not buy".

What is sharpening minds at Hyundai even more is the proliferation of new brands on the market, many of them from China.

When asked how Hyundai is responding to the rise of so many new brands, Martinet says: "The more you're working on your brand and the more you're working on customer-centric vehicles, the less vulnerable you'll be.

"I think the Hyundai of 10 years ago would have been way more vulnerable than the Hyundai we have right now on the market."

> **"The products should be great. The service should be great as well"**

GETTY IMAGES

EV SALES BUOYED BY ELECTRIC CAR GRANT

UK sales of electric cars hit an all-time high in September

The government's Electric Car Grant (ECG) helped to drive a record number of new EV sales in the UK in September.

During the crucial 'new numberplate' month, 72,779 new electric cars were registered, according to data from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. That's 29.1% more than in September 2024 and just over half the number of petrol cars sold.

It was also the highest monthly sales total on record for new EVs and took their overall market share to 22.1%. However, while that's up 4.3% year on year, it is still below the zero-emission vehicle mandate's 28% target for 2025.

Both the government and the SMMT attributed the rise in EV sales last month to the ECG, which is said to have been used by 20,000 buyers. Launched in August, the ECG is backed by a £650 million fund and offers either £1500 or £3750 off the price of eligible sub-£37,000 EVs.

Eligibility is determined by a set of environmental and sustainability impact criteria. So far, of the 36 eligible models, only the Ford E-Tourneo Courier and Puma Gen-E have qualified for the higher discount – but the incoming, UK-built Nissan Leaf is also set to be eligible for it.

In total, 312,887 new cars were sold in September, up 13.7% on the same month last year. The fleet market was the main driver and recorded a 16.9% year-on-year increase to 174,335 sales, but private demand was up 8.9% to 131,000 units.

WILL RIMELL

WHAT ARE WE BUYING?

↑ **Petrols** 2.4%
141,308

↑ **BEVs** 29.1%
72,779

↑ **Hybrids** 3.5%
47,883

↑ **Plug-in hybrids** 56.4%
38,308

↓ **Diesels** 28.2%
12,609

SMMT: FIGURES FOR NEW CARS IN SEPTEMBER

VOLVO SEES GROWTH FROM EVs AND A NEW SALES APPROACH

Amid a bumper month for new car sales in the UK, Volvo recorded its best September yet, increasing sales by 23% year on year to 11,569 for a 3.7% market share.

UK managing director Nicole Melillo Shaw attributed the hike to the popularity of the EX30 and effectiveness of Volvo's new retail model. We spoke to her to hear more.

Which models are performing well?
"XC40 is our biggest seller by far. But EX30 has gathered momentum in the last few months. It's doubled in terms of orders so it's really important, particularly with our ambition for electrification."

Why has your direct-to-consumer model been successful?
"The whole point is to have transparent pricing for consumers, to get away from some of that legacy negativity around having to haggle over price. We're also getting better at consumer closeness, which is critical as well, so our consumers are able to enjoy the experience more."

Direct sales have been contentious with dealers across many car makers. How have you dealt with it?
"We've worked very closely with [our dealers]. If you don't do it in partnership, then the consumer will fall down the middle. We worked well in advance of the launch – probably about 18 months or two years – with our key network partners to deliver something that is relevant and meaningful. And that conversation hasn't stopped. If you look at the dealer sentiment, it's very positive around how we've done this together."

UK managing director Nicole Melillo Shaw

Orders for EX30 electric SUV have "doubled"

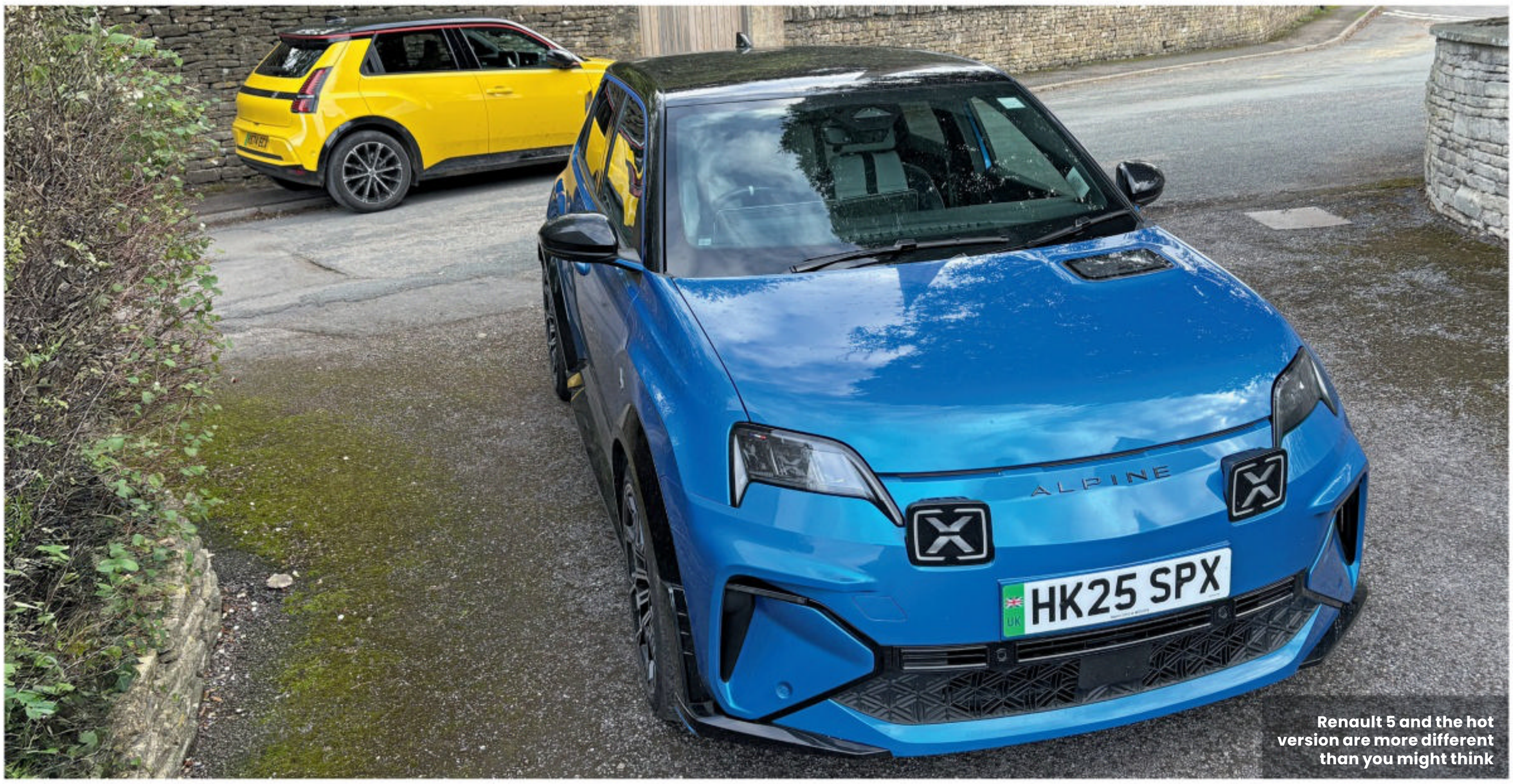
There have been issues with software on models such as the EX90. What's the situation now?
"EX90 is by far our most technologically advanced product. We're proud of what we've achieved and we've learned a lot along the way. We take those learnings as we move forward in our electrification journey. We are committed to technology and it's important that we can continue to evolve on that.

"As we launch model year '26, there is a significant software update. We're working really hard to ensure customers get a better product with every update that comes along."

There's a consensus that the electric car market is softening. Have you seen that at Volvo?
"Not at all. We've actually seen that electric is growing. There's a whole population of customers that are in that camp of 'now or next one?'. And our job is to make sure that they have all the information to choose the right car for them. So we have got a balanced portfolio. However, the most innovative products, and the ones that we believe are the best cars, are electrified."

MY WEEK IN CARS

Steve Cropley



Renault 5 and the hot version are more different than you might think

SUNDAY

The latest Bicester Scramble was the best ever, I reckon. The world's most welcoming venue was packed with interesting cars – a perfect mixture of new arrivals and old friends. Come to think of it, most of the car events I've attended in 2025 – from Warwickshire's Race Retro to the uplifting Goodwood Members' Meeting, a joyous Festival of the Unexceptional and a whole crop of friendly events at Prescott, my home track – have set new standards. Decent summer weather (leaving out the Watergate Bay Sprint last month) has helped, but it does strike me that event organisers today get ever better at anticipating what we punters like. Perhaps the density of the competition is another factor: some weekends there are three or four enticing places the Steering Committee and I could go. But that doesn't stop us regretting that the season is over and looking forward to 2026.

> “We made it to the chargers, but not comfortably”

MONDAY

Matt Prior and I did 600 miles in an Alpine A290 today. We used the EV for a one-day trip from his Oxfordshire roost up to Cockermouth, Cumbria, where we interviewed Malcolm Wilson, former rally champion and boss of the M-Sport race engineering business, who this year also became vice-president of the FIA.

Somehow Britain's car events just keep on getting better

Wilson was fascinating on all subjects and will feature very soon in an hour-long Autocar Meets podcast, which I would urge you not to miss.

Having now done 11,000 miles in five months in a Renault 5, I was relishing the chance to put it together with its quicker sibling (see above).

The A290 proved instantly excellent – apart from the fact that its extra poke and poorer aerodynamics meant its 52kWh battery offered around 30-40 fewer miles, which is a lot on long journeys. At times (especially, on one occasion, while driving into a 30-40mph headwind) we drove this rapid little car far slower than we would have done the 5, just to be sure of reaching a service area with a decent array of chargers. We made it, but not comfortably.

WEDNESDAY

Quite a long email conversation with a reader who has just bought a Jeep Wrangler Rubicon (a similar model to our recently departed Sahara but slightly more off-roady) and has been delighted with everything but its fuel consumption. According to the fuel computer, it's always in the mid-teens. Our average over 15,000 miles was 26.6mpg – not marvellous but okay.

The Rubicon owner and I talked about driving style and rolling resistance (his car has standard knobbly tyres that don't help consumption), but nothing could account for the difference. Then it occurred to me that his fuel computer might, by accident, be thinking in smaller US gallons rather than our own imperial kind. He measured the consumption manually and it soared into the 23s. Now the task is either to find a way to adjust that errant fuel computer or cover it with black tape and forget it forever.

FRIDAY

And so to the 5-or-A290 decision. For me it's easy: I would take the former any day. Lots of people will love the pocket-rocket nature of the Alpine and the Premiere Edition's extra luxury. It's definitely slightly sharper to steer and a bit better planted in corners, but the Renault is already fast and agile, especially from zero to 50-60mph. My eye says it looks better (especially in Pop Yellow) and I enjoy the softer springs and the lower road noise. But the deal-breaker is range. I depend on the 5 for 200 miles at this time of year, which suits where I go and how I drive; the A290 is really only good for 160 miles. Fine for many; not for me.

AND ANOTHER THING

My Alpine A110 is back home and I'm delighted. It needed repairs to its wings, because the steel clips unwisely used by Dieppe to hold the wheel-arch liners in place reacted with the aluminium outer panels. Alpine's panel experts have made it so good again that it might even be better than new.

GET IN TOUCH
steve.cropley@haymarket.com

PRIOR CONVICTION

Matt Prior

A month on from hearing about its creation, I still don't know how I feel about the T-plate.

The brainchild of Scottish hotelier Robert Marshall, this is a sticker bearing a large green 'T' (and a smaller 'Tourist' postscript) that visitors can apply to the back of their car, just like learners do with a red L-plate and new drivers sometimes do with a green L- or P-plate.

The short of it is that it's meant to let other road users know that a driver is unfamiliar with the area, perhaps the car and even rules or local driving habits too.

On the face of it, this thoughtful, simple idea seems like – probably is – a good one.

Marshall told the BBC that he was "stressed out of my head" during an "awful" driving experience on holiday in Tenerife and just wanted a way to let other road users know that he was a tourist, so that they would give him a bit of patience and slack, like we tend to do for learners. Once back home in Scotland, he started making and selling a way to do that.

Scotland, after all, is not without plenty of visiting drivers who don't know what they're doing or where they're going. Most of the world doesn't drive on the left and yet Scotland is home to the North Coast 500, one of the world's most famous and successful (or unsuccessful, if it's your field that tourists are camping or crapping in) road trips.

Advertising that you're unfamiliar with these surroundings and that other drivers should therefore be warier around you is potentially quite sound thinking.

The T-plates aren't officially recognised car signs, but Transport Scotland told CNN: "As we understand it, as long as it's not offensive, you can put what you like on your car."

NC500
John O' Groats
Ullapool

Great driving roads tend to attract many less than great drivers

It's simple, sensible thinking and a practical solution. So why do I have any reticence about it at all?

I dunno... Somehow, I'm comfortable going into a fishmonger in France and explaining that I'm sorry but I don't speak brilliant French, so could they possibly demonstrate a little patience with me while I try to remember the right word for prawn? But to me that feels different to explaining that you don't quite know what you're doing with this 1.8-tonne piece of metal but you're going to drive it down the road at 70mph anyway. 'So just bear with me if I brake or swerve suddenly when I spot a distillery I'd like to visit, yeah?'

> **"Just bear with me if I brake or swerve suddenly, yeah?"**

I don't want driving standards to be excused downward; I'd prefer they were expected upward.

Sure, driving in an unfamiliar car in an unfamiliar place can be unnerving. But it is why we had to pass driving tests in the first instance. We didn't cut licences out from the back of cereal boxes; it was expected that we'd have a number of lessons and be examined so that we knew that we were capable of doing it properly. Familiarising oneself with a vehicle and the local driving regulations is a part of the gig. If you can't be bothered with it, then, well, they have buses.

I'd rather come across a visiting driver who is unfamiliar with their surroundings but, aware that I would have no knowledge of this, is putting serious thought and effort into applying their best driving behaviour than someone who thinks that, because they've got a green T on the back of their car, they can take more liberties. 'Yes, I'm doing a U-turn now. Hey, I did tell you I was a plum!'

I feel similarly about green L- and P-plates, to be honest. If you're trained properly, you shouldn't need them. Fresh from examining and training and reading the Highway Code, new drivers ought to know the road rules as well as anyone. Like visiting drivers ought to have read about local road rules more recently than locals.

Perhaps I'm overthinking this. It's probably a decent idea and only the conscientious, who wouldn't be a bother in the first instance, will be thoughtful enough to use them. But I think I will just keep assuming what I typically do: there's a good chance that this person, regardless of stickers, has no idea what they're doing.

GET IN TOUCH
matthew.prior@haymarket.com

T
TOURIST
KV68 OLP

Why should a driver with a T-plate on their car be granted any leeway?

RACING LINES

Damien Smith

Tensions between Norris and Piastri have risen as the season comes to a climax

Six races to go. Time for McLaren to drop its 'papaya rules' and simply leave Oscar Piastri and Lando Norris to it as they fight each other for the greatest prize in motorsport.

Admirably, the team has bent over backwards to keep it fair as the young team-mates have locked horns for the honour of becoming world champion. As Formula 1 history shows, two bulls in one field never usually ends well, but McLaren deserves credit so far for managing its duo better than past examples – the bitterness of the Prost/Senna, Mansell/Piquet and Hamilton/Rosberg battles springs to mind.

But inevitably tensions have built, especially in the wake of three recent occasions when those 'papaya rules' have worked against Piastri. Publicly, he's played down any doubts over parity. But by nature racing drivers are a paranoid and hyper-sensitive breed. At the Hungaroring, Norris was run to what turned out to be a superior race strategy, which allowed him to jump Piastri and win; at Monza, the Australian was angered when he was ordered to hand back second place after Norris had lost it through a slow pit stop, arguing that such misfortune was just part of racing.

Then in Singapore last time out, Norris inadvertently nerfed his team-mate in an aggressive move through Turn 3 after the start. The stewards were right to take no action, and Norris was defiant that he had raced as anyone would in such a scenario. But one could well understand Piastri's real frustration in the intense heat of the moment.

At Marina Bay, McLaren clinched an impressively inevitable second consecutive constructors' title, its first back-to-back achievement since its 1988-91 purple patch and the 10th in its history. But Piastri's simmering anger took some of the shine away.

It's motor racing's age-old paradox: a team game in which the selfish desires of the individual naturally crack the surface. But now McLaren's first priority for the season is done. Starting this weekend in Austin for the US GP, Andrea Stella and Zak Brown should draw a new line: no more interference or manipulation once the lights go out. It's down to the drivers now, and it's all theirs to win and lose.

> **"Harmony is an unnatural state for a Formula 1 team"**

RELEASING THE HANDBRAKE

The risk, of course, is opening the door to a dramatic Max Verstappen comeback. But Red Bull's ace is 63 points off Piastri's lead. Even for Max, it's a monumental task. Of greater consequence for McLaren is the potential long-term damage all-out civil war might do to its intra-team harmony. Then again, let's be realistic: that's an unnatural state for an F1 team to maintain, especially between such closely matched drivers fighting with so much at stake.

What's really fascinating about Piastri versus Norris is not so much about who will prevail, but the effect of defeat on whoever loses. Then next year, there's the big engine/chassis regulation change, which means there is no guarantee McLaren will maintain its current level of superiority. So many factors, so much to fear and doubt... F1 people are obsessed about keeping control, by micro-managing every detail, but any interference will create unintended consequences. Releasing the handbrake is the only fair way to let Piastri and Norris race – at least for now.

Tom Ingram took BTCC title at Brands Hatch with a round to spare

INGRAM'S DOUBLE JOY

Jason Plato, Alain Menu, Fabrizio Giovanardi, John Cleland, Jack Sears... Just some of the great company Tom Ingram now keeps, having become British Touring Car Champion for a second time. The 32-year-old and his Excelr8 Hyundai i30 N were by some margin the best and most complete combination across 2025. Ingram scored the most wins (seven) and, crucially, the most second places (eight), with only Alliance Racing's Ash Sutton keeping him in range until the final weekend. Even then at Brands Hatch, Ingram secured the title – adding to his first in 2022 – with a round to spare after a commanding win in the second of the day's three races.

"I've had the best season's racing I've had in my life – [our team] have completely smashed it!" said a jubilant Ingram. "I've put absolutely everything into this; it's been incredibly full-on both physically and emotionally, and the hard work that has gone in behind the scenes has been unmatched.

"The BTCC has been my lifelong dream – my passion, my hobby, my everything – and I never wanted to be a one-hit wonder. This one feels more special than it did in 2022. Then, it felt like we came into the weekend as underdogs and pulled it off, but this year we have left nothing on the table."

As Ingram celebrated, the BTCC bid farewell to last year's champion, Jake Hill. It's hardly a surprise: the 31-year-old has always been open about his wider ambitions, and specifically he wants to race at Le Mans. But if Sutton is the BTCC's Roger Federer and Ingram is Novak Djokovic, Hill is Rafa Nadal. He'll be missed.

YOUR VIEWS

WRITE TO autocar@haymarket.com

Letter of the week

NECESSARY FORCE

Autocar's associate editor James Attwood finds cause to celebrate the car industry's resistance to the regulatory push towards electric vehicles, arguing that "car firms are at their best when given a problem to solve and allowed freedom to find solutions" (Comment, 17 September).

In the absence of a fundamental global switch to renewable hydrogen production, which is simply not happening, EVs offer the best available means of keeping us all mobile while reducing and ultimately eliminating fossil fuel dependency in the road transport sector. Their efficiency and affordability are improving rapidly, and the car industry deserves credit for this. However, it would be naive to think that car makers, if left to their own devices, would do anything other than to continue selling polluting ICE products while evading responsibility for the lifetime greenhouse gas output of the ICE vehicles they have sold.

Mr Attwood might regret the demise of ICE cars, but his arguments set a recreational driver's enthusiasm against a mountain of climate science and hard commercial reality.

Karl Cradick, Christchurch, Dorset

My argument isn't that car makers should be left to their own devices but that targets could be set for emission reduction that don't enforce a single solution – JA

LEADERSHIP FAILURE

Virtually all of the West's motor manufacturers are struggling. Their supposedly visionary CEOs have been caught out by the slow take-up of EVs.

Variously described as an "unexpected" or "unforeseen" slowdown in sales or a "slower than expected take-up" of EVs, the reality is there was a massive outbreak of groupthink among these highly paid individuals. The impact on their companies and their brands and the losses inflicted on their shareholders as they have reversed course have been truly shocking.

Yet somehow, because so many made the same mistake, none have really been held to account. It has been a dismal failure of management at the highest level.

Only make cars to government diktat if the government is going to buy them. Otherwise make cars your customers want to buy. Forget that at your shareholders' peril.

Peter Rigg
Via email

HOW MUCH?!

If Zenos couldn't sell enough cars at £25,000 a time, I'm puzzled why the new owner thinks they can sell the same car with a more powerful engine for £140,000 (First Drives, 1 October). Surely the E10 is going to need a lot of work to make it look and feel like it's worth the higher price.

Bob Cholmondeley
Via autocar.co.uk

A HAPPY ENDING

I wrote to you in July about numerous problems my wife had had with her Bentley Continental GTC and wish to thank you for contacting Bentley, which has since resulted in all the faults being corrected. I have also taken out an extended warranty.

While the car is six years old, it has covered only 27,000 miles and is always garaged, so I hadn't expected the problems that initially arose.

On the advice of Bentley, I returned the car to Bentley of Chelmsford, the dealer from which we had purchased the car, and they only repaired one small item. At this point, I decided to write to Autocar about my dissatisfaction.

After Autocar contacted Bentley head office, they sorted everything out and said to me that this should never had needed such intervention to achieve a satisfactory conclusion.

I would like to thank Bentley for carrying out the repairs at no cost to me and to thank Autocar for contacting Bentley on my behalf.

This has been a frustrating experience, as the Continental GTC is a brilliant car dynamically, being a joy to drive and to be within its luxurious interior.

Barry Wayne
Woodbridge, Suffolk

John shares our love for the 911 – but reckons the 993 is still the best

Want an easier life? Buy one of these

Testarossa: can you see any curves?

JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH

Richard Lane's thoughts on the dominance of Porsche 911s (Testing, Testing, 10 September) in Autocar's pages were interesting.

Porsche has been doing this car since the 1960s. It's what they do and why they win group tests. It's because their car isn't 'a bit of filler' for the marketing department or a vanity project for the current CEO. BMW is similarly minded.

Porsches are way too expensive for me, but I admire the fact that it has honed the 911 over the decades. Older patrons might recall the lead weights in the front bumper to even weight distribution in the early '80s.

Given the car's unique handling balance, which as far as I have been told went from terrifying to sublime (both are attractive traits, it seems) over the years, it seems that people will be waxing lyrical for some time to come about the 911.

'405line'
Via autocar.co.uk

PORSCHE PORKERS

As a habitual Porsche driver (924, Turbo 924, several 911s, 928 S, six-cylinder Boxster S), my main problem with new-era Porsches is their size and weight. Yes, I know legislation means they have to be heavier and heftier, but why the extra-wide rear arches? If we assume that 99% of Porsche drivers never get beyond about 75% of their potential and then only on an occasional Sunday morning, what on earth is the point of generating extra g-forces?

I loved my 993-generation 911. It was tiny and, for the day, really fast. That's why I would never swap my

10-year-old Boxster S for a new 911: just too fat for me. I will probably invite it to my funeral.

John Fagan Williams
Via autocar.co.uk

HEROES AND VILLAINS

My extended family and I have six cars between us, and it is striking that one of the six produces really warm, courteous, friendly reactions from other road users, and another produces the exact reverse. You might enjoy deciding which is which.

The cars are, in no particular order: Bentley Continental GTC, Mercedes-Benz V-Class, Bentley Bentayga, Volvo XC40, Rolls-Royce Phantom Drophead, Tesla Model 3.

I like to think I drive each pretty much the same way, but the one that gets the best reaction from other road users is… the V-Class. It makes it a delight to drive. No wonder every vehicle in London seems to be a V-Class. Runner-up is the XC40.

And the one that gets the worst reaction and has other drivers virtually driving into me? The Rolls. Runner-up in that category? One of the Bentleys, maybe? Or the Tesla, perhaps? No, there is no runner-up: the Rolls is in a class of its own in this respect. A pity, but maybe it's human nature.

William Davies
Leicestershire

THROWING BRICKBATS

Is it just me, or does Ferrari appear to have designed the new 849 Testarossa so that the Lego version will look identical to the real thing?

Mike Rann
Great Kingshill, Buckinghamshire

PLUS CA CHANGAN

So China's Changan is coming to the UK (Grapevine, 17 September). Is it going to excite us with something new and innovative? No, just another £40,000 electric SUV. Yawn.

KC
Via email

WE DON'T CARE

Is Autocar on an incentive to test as many Chinese electric four-wheel chest freezers as possible? Please consider reverting to, primarily at least, reviewing the cars for which enthusiasts buy the magazine.

Tim Bulmer
Via email

As it always has, Autocar reviews every new car that reaches the UK market – JA

Weekly winner

Letter of the week wins this ValetPro exterior protection and maintenance kit worth £48

GREAT REASONS TO BUY

Next week's issue

ON SALE 22 OCTOBER

TRIPLE TEST
X3 SAV
KY25 EHU

PORSCHE vs AUDI AND BMW

Our road testers have a hunch the best Macan Electric is the 4S. Are they right and is it good enough to beat an SQ5 Sportback and X3 M50?

FIRST DRIVE

VOLVO ES90

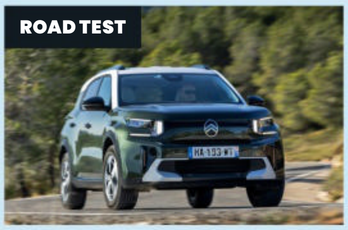
New liftback flagship EV rated. Don't buy that BMW i5 until you've read it

UK VERDICT
S MB 1743E

MERCEDES-BENZ CLA

Upmarket compact EV struts its sleek, ultra-efficient stuff on UK roads

EVERY WEEK



CITROEN C3 AIRCROSS

How does this newcomer stack up against the likes of the Dacia Duster as a value-led SUV?

MERCEDES C-CLASS

Just £4000 buys this exec saloon with a highly desirable badge. But here's what you need to know first

AUTOCAR

The original car magazine, published since 1895 'in the interests of the mechanically propelled road carriage'

EDITORIAL
Email autocar@haymarket.com
Editor Mark Tisshaw
Editor-in-chief Steve Cropley
Magazine editor Rachel Burgess
Associate editor James Attwood
Managing editor Sami Shah
Editor-at-large Matt Prior
Digital editor Murray Scullion
Deputy editor Felix Page
Road test editor Matt Saunders
Deputy road test editor Richard Lane
Road tester Illya Verpraet
News editor Will Rimell
Staff writers Charlie Martin, Sam Phillips, Jack Warrick
Editorial assistants Danny Davies, Leonardo Stracca, Alex Wolstenholme
Chief sub-editor Kris Culmer
Senior syndication manager Tom Evans
Group art editor Stephen Hopkins
Art editor Sarah Özgül
Designer Tara Tuohy
Senior photographer Max Edleston
Photographer Jack Harrison
Videographer Sergiu Avram
Picture editor Ben Summerell-Youde
Content creator apprentice Sophia Grace

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS
European editor Greg Kable
Motorsport editor Damien Smith
Business correspondent Nick Gibbs
Technology correspondent Jesse Crosse
Senior correspondent John Evans
Senior contributing writer Andrew Frankel
Regular contributors John Bradshaw, Richard Bremner, Alastair Clements, Tim Dickson, James Disdale, Peter Liddiard, Peter McSean, Richard Webber

MEDIA ENQUIRIES
Email autocar@haymarket.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Tel 0344 848 8816
Overseas +44 (0)1604 251450
Email subscriptions.team@haymarket.com

SYNDICATION ENQUIRIES
Tel +44 (0)1962 867705
Contact Simon Fox
(simon@foxsyndication.com)

LICENSING ENQUIRIES
Contact Kate Hannam
(kate.hannam@haymarket.com)

BACK ISSUES
Tel 0344 848 8816
Email help@autocar.themagazineshop.com

ADVERTISING
Head of trading and agency development Richard Potton
(richard.potton@haymarket.com)
Account manager (display) Millie Remie
(millie.remie@haymarket.com)

PUBLISHING
Newstrade marketing manager
Isabella McDermid
Newstrade marketing executive
Lance Pereira

PRODUCTION
Tel +44 (0)20 8267 5639
Head of production operations
Trevor Simpson
Group production manager Ailsa Donovan

MANAGEMENT
Managing director Rachael Prasher
Marketing director Darren Pitt

© 2025, Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Autocar, Motor, Autocar & Motor are registered trademarks.
Circulation enquiries: Frontline Ltd, 1st Floor, Stuart House, St John's Street, Peterborough, PE1 5DD (01733 555161). Printed by William Gibbons, Wolverhampton. Registered as a newspaper with the Royal Mail. Member of the ABC. ISSN 1355-8293.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form except by permission. The publisher makes every effort to ensure contents are correct but cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions. Unsolicited material is submitted to Autocar entirely at the owner's risk; the publisher accepts no responsibility for loss or damage.
With regret, competitions and promotional offers, unless otherwise stated, are not available to readers outside the UK and Eire.

GPSR EU RP
Manufacturer: Haymarket Media Group Limited.
Frankfurter Str. 3d (ARTmax) 38122 Braunschweig
+49 (0)531 38004-0
info@haymarket.de

General Product Safety 2023/988: The use of our product under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, including the actual duration of use, does not present any risk or only the minimum risks compatible with the product's use, which are considered acceptable and consistent with a high level of protection of the health and safety of consumers.

CONTENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

FIRST DRIVES

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

26 KIA EV5

28 DS N°4 E-TENSE

32 BMW 750E

38 VOLVO XC60

HOW WE TEST CARS

Autocar delivers several kinds of reviews on new cars, with different levels of technical and functional scrutiny. As the name suggests, our First Drives section typically addresses cars that we're driving for the first time – either in final production form or as late prototypes. Time in the car can be limited here, technical and equipment specification might not be finalised and some systems software may not be to production specification. For those reasons, First Drive reports don't have star ratings.

Once we have driven a car for a second time in the UK, in right-hand-drive form and typically at greater length, we will rate it, either as part of a shorter UK test report or as the subject of a full, instrumented Road Test.

In the latter case, we take empirical performance and refinement benchmarks from it at Horiba MIRA proving ground, as well as subjective limit handling impressions, plus key measurements of practicality, efficiency and kerb weight.

All UK tests and Road Tests receive proper verdicts with star ratings informed by everything we have learned and the combined impressions and experience of several testers.

TESTED 22.9.25, NORTH JUTLAND, DENMARK **DELIVERIES** EARLY 2026

TOYOTA C-HR+

EV-agnostic Japanese giant's bZ4X electric SUV spawns a smaller but confusingly named offspring

While it's hard to keep up with Kia's relentless launch schedule – there appears to be a new, differently numbered EV every week – Toyota takes things more steadily. Its approach has the slow but relentless momentum that comes with being the world's largest car maker. And with momentum also comes inertia – and that complicates changes of direction, in particular the one needed to do electric cars well. Toyota loves its hybrids but has been very slow to come up with the EVs that it does need in Europe. The new C-HR+ is only its second mainstream EV, after the bZ4X. It will soon also launch the Urban Cruiser, of course, but that's a Suzuki underneath.

Didn't it already have a C-HR? Well, yes – the regular C-HR is its Volkswagen T-Roc- and Qashqai-sized sensible-but-supposedly-stylish hybrid SUV, but the '+' in the new name indicates that it's the completely unrelated electric equivalent of roughly the same size. Obvs. At least with this week's new Kia (see p26), the name tells you what powers it and where it sits in the range…

Instead of being an electric version of the existing C-HR, the C-HR+ is actually a shortened bZ4X – not unlike the way that the Skoda Elroq is a shortened Enyaq. That means it gets all the same improvements as the recently updated version of its sister model.

Put it next to a bZ4X and there are more visual differences than there are between the Skoda twins – particularly the C-HR+'s kinked shoulder line and round wheel-arch trims. There's a lot going on with the design – busy surfacing, a 'coupé' roofline and a ducktail spoiler – yet all together it manages to look not particularly distinctive.

Peculiarly, despite being the cheaper, smaller model, the C-HR+ has a bigger battery option than the recently updated bZ4X. The entry-level battery is the same: a 57.7kWh (total capacity) pack that comes with a single 165bhp motor and which – one imagines – will have limited popularity in the UK.

The long-range option is where it's at: it has a 77kWh pack (rather than bZ4X's 73kWh), which, in combination with the single 221bhp front motor, gives it 378 miles of range, or 350 miles with the 20in wheels that most people will probably pick. That's more than a Skoda Elroq 85, despite having a smaller battery. We're still waiting for a final WLTP efficiency figure, but based on that range it sounds fairly impressive. Go for the dual-motor model, with 338bhp, and the range does drop a bit.

The C-HR+ has the same 150kW DC charge speed, which looks a bit weedy in the bZ4X when compared with the Hyundai Ioniq 5, but it is perfectly acceptable here in this lower segment.

Inside, it's all very bZ4X. If you're being charitable, you'd say it feels robust. The dashboard and door cards are composed of Toyota's trademark blend of 11 textures of grey rubber, which doesn't feel cheap but is far from upmarket. The centre console ticks all the practicality boxes, including the lack of fingerprint-prone surfaces, but goodness it's dull.

Not to sound ungrateful, but the area in which Toyota has tried to be a bit zany hasn't really worked. Like on the bZ4X, it does the Peugeot-style thing of having a high-set instrument cluster with a small steering wheel. While I didn't have any trouble seeing the driver display, it's still a compromised set-up that doesn't address any unsolved problems. ▸

TESTER'S NOTE

'C-HR' isn't just a random set of letters and punctuation. When the original came out, Toyota said it stood for Coupé High Rider. File that with Midship Runabout… **IV**

> "It's not soft or plush, but it has quite a reassuring sense of unbreakability"

◀ To grab the steering wheel and still rest your elbows on the armrests means doing a sort of chicken dance. Otherwise, the driving position is good: it's fairly high up, and Toyota's seats are typically superb. The ultra-soft microsuede upholstery is pleasant, but again, did it need to be this grey?

The big infotainment touchscreen is crisp, responsive and generally logical, if a little basic – which suits a Toyota pretty well. Space in the back is slightly down on the Elroq, with a fairly high floor. Its 452 litres of boot volume is pretty good, though, if still down on that pesky Skoda.

You can trust modern Toyotas to feel pretty well put-together to drive, and this one is no different. Accelerator and brake pedals are nicely progressive, and paddles let you vary the amount of lift-off regeneration, stopping short of a proper one-pedal drive mode. The dual-motor version I drove was pretty quick. It's just not that kind of car, though, and you would be fine with the single-motor model.

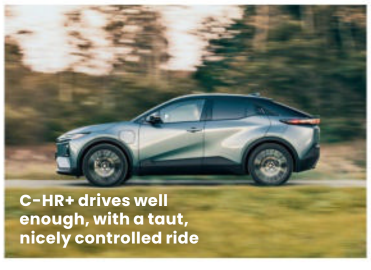
Even so, Toyota claims the C-HR+ is "designed for car lovers, with a rewarding, fun-to-drive character", which is a significant overstatement. It handles securely and intuitively, but there's very little feedback coming through the steering, and responses from the front end aren't particularly immediate. Meanwhile, when you put your foot down out of a tight corner, there's never any doubt that it's the front axle that's receiving the most power. It rides with the same tightly controlled, rubbery gait as some other Toyotas. It's not soft or plush, but it has quite a reassuring sense of unbreakability about it. It's actually quite a nice compromise.

Toyota's big selling point has long been the ownership experience, and that ought to be the case for the C-HR+ as well. Reliability tends to be strong, there's the potential of a 10-year warranty and the C-HR+ lets you easily check the battery health: there's a screen in the driver display that tells you what percentage of the original battery capacity remains.

Real-world efficiency ought to be another strong point, but we would need more time in a single-motor car to come to a definitive verdict. On our initial drive of the dual-motor version, efficiency was fairly disappointing at 3.0mpkWh. Prices, meanwhile, will be announced closer to customer deliveries at the start of next year, but expect around mid- to high-£30,000s for single-motor cars, a bit more for the dual-motor – in line with rivals.

It feels like Toyota's heart still isn't fully in EVs, and the C-HR+ seems unambitious. It's competitive enough and pleasant to drive, and it's the sort of car that's likely to give several years of uneventful service with few annoyances, in a way that a Jeep Compass might not. It does risk getting lost in a sea of similar rivals, though.

ILLYA VERPRAET



C-HR+ drives well enough, with a taut, nicely controlled ride

The cabin is decked in 50 shades of grey, but the seats are excellent

TECH SPEC

TOYOTA C-HR+ AWD

Pleasant, if mostly conventional and a little on the unambitious side

Price £40,000 (est)
Engine Two permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 338bhp
Torque 324lb ft
Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, 4WD
Kerb weight 2010kg
0-62mph 5.2sec
Top speed 112mph
Battery 77/74kWh (total/est usable)
Range, economy 339 miles, na
CO_2, tax band 0g/km, 3%
Rivals Skoda Elroq 85, Renault Scenic E-Tech

TESTED 7.10.25, JEREZ, SPAIN **DELIVERIES** SPRING 2026

SUBARU UNCHARTED

Not quite déjà vu as Subaru reformulates new Toyota EV for off-roading

There's a 7in driver display, a 14in touchscreen and plenty of physical controls

Huge and instant torque of electric motors makes driving on dirt a breeze

You've just read about Toyota's new C-HR+; now meet its twin brother, the Subaru Uncharted.

The strategic partnership between the two Japanese companies resulted in this pair of small electric crossovers being co-developed, but while their underpinnings are shared, Subaru insists that the Uncharted is a very different machine.

The Uncharted is proportionally similar to the C-HR+ but has an increased ride height of 211mm to aid off-road driving, plus its own bespoke suspension and steering tune for what Subaru says is a more sporting feel.

While this early drive didn't include any on-road mileage, we put the car through a series of tests at the Jerez race circuit in Spain, beginning with an off-road driving course. Here the 338bhp dual-motor AWD model proved to be competent and controlled on the steep terrain surrounding the track.

This range-topper gets the same X-Mode off-road system and Grip Control system (which acts like off-road cruise control) as the combustion-engined Forester SUV, meaning it does all the hard work for you.

The Uncharted's Multi-Terrain Monitor gives you a clear view of the surface below. This came in handy when I was navigating the tight course, helping me avoid the most severe rocks and crevices.

Thanks in part to its short overhangs, the Uncharted climbed and descended some seriously steep gradients with ease, its hill descent control automatically braking the wheels when going downhill.

Grip Control allows you to set your speed for off-roading, and it works impressively. I parked the Uncharted on a slab of rock on a steep bank, I set the Grip Control to its medium-speed setting and it pulled away just as it would from a simple set of traffic lights.

Acceleration is best described as progressive rather than whip-crack, but the car by no means feels slow. The four-wheel drive system serves up plenty of traction, dispatching 0-62mph in less than 5.0sec.

The brake pedal feels a little soft, but adjustable regen slows the car nicely when you lift off the throttle.

Short stints on the circuit's access roads hinted at a car that is composed, pliant and softer than you might expect. Aggressive imperfections could unsettle the ride, but we will need some time on UK roads for clarity.

A few laps of a go-kart track and a slalom course revealed the Uncharted to be surprisingly agile. There's some body roll in corners, and while the steering is light, it's also precise, gaining some additional weight in Power mode.

A short go in a cheaper, single-motor, front-wheel-drive version (of which there are two) showed it to be broadly similar, although less nimble through the slalom, with less traction out of corners.

The introduction of a FWD car marks a change of tack for Subaru, as the larger Solterra EV (a twin of the Toyota bZ4X) comes only with dual-motor AWD.

The entry-level Uncharted pairs a 57.7kWh battery with a 165bhp motor for a 282-mile range, while the Long Range variant makes 221bhp and can do up to 372 miles, thanks to a larger 77kWh battery.

A range of 326 miles is expected for the top-end AWD version, but Subaru has yet to fully homologate the range figures.

We need more time behind the wheel to fully gauge the Uncharted's dynamic ability, but it has shown real signs of promise in this first encounter – not just to the Subaru faithful but also to those who shop in the mainstream.

SAM PHILLIPS

TECH SPEC

SUBARU UNCHARTED AWD

Has genuine off-road capability and brisk performance, although its on-road character remains uncertain

Price £45,000 (est)
Engine Two permanent magnet synchronous motors
Power 338bhp
Torque 324lb ft
Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, 4WD
Kerb weight 2000kg (est)
0-62mph 4.7sec
Top speed 99mph
Battery 77/74kWh (total/est usable)
Range, economy 326 miles, 4.2mpkWh (est)
CO_2, tax band 0g/km, 3%
Rivals Cupra Tavascan, Ford Capri

TESTER'S NOTE

The cabin architecture is identical to the C-HR+. It feels quite well put together, with a rugged vibe. Rear space isn't amazing, though. **SP**

"It's almost identical in its dimensions to the Sportage but roomier inside"

TESTED 1.10.25, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA **DELIVERIES** DECEMBER

KIA EV5

Latest eye-catching electric Kia is a straightforward family SUV

If first impressions of the Kia EV5 are a touch underwhelming, it's only because of the lofty expectations set by its predecessors. This is a well-designed and well-rounded family SUV with a good range that is competitively priced, decently equipped, comfortable and decent to drive. It should be near the front of an increasingly competitive class. It just doesn't really change the game.

It was only four years ago that the EV6 SUV-coupé helped transform what Kia seemed capable of in design and technology. Since then, the large EV9 and small EV3 SUVs and the EV4 hatchback/saloon have all in their own ways pushed new boundaries. The EV5, however, is exactly what you would expect it to be. Thing is, it's not here to be revolutionary: it's here so that Kia can sell loads of them.

The EV5 is the electric equivalent of the Sportage, the Korean brand's biggest seller and the UK's top-selling family SUV. So while early estimates are modest (Kia UK expects to sell around 6000 EV5s next year, far below the 47,163 Sportages it shifted in 2024), this is a key model for growing EV sales in the future.

Pricing will start from £39,295, with top-spec GT-Line S models reaching £47,095. That's a chunk of money more than a Sportage but competitive against rivals such as the Tesla Model Y and Volkswagen ID 4, even if it is slightly undercut by that new electric SUV from the latest weirdly named Chinese brand you had never heard of that launched in the UK last week.

There's already a sense of familiarity about the EV5: it was revealed back in May 2023 and has been on sale – albeit with different technology and batteries – in China for the past two years.

The design builds off both the EV3 and EV9, and while it gets a new treatment of Kia's 'Tiger Face' grille and narrow LED headlights, there is a sense of 'nesting doll' overfamiliarity working its way in.

Could you tell an EV5 from an EV3, EV4 or EV9? We're starting to struggle

You sit high in a cabin that has good tech, perceived quality and practicality

Kia
EV5
61ㅁ 1018

EV5 majors on ride comfort, in line with its family SUV billing

TESTER'S NOTE

A new mode will maintain the optimum interior temperature for a "comfortably, pet-friendly environment" while you've nipped out. Your dog will thank you for it. **JA**

What was radical just a few years ago now seems a bit safe.

At just over 4.6 metres long, the EV5 is firmly in family SUV territory, being almost identical in its dimensions to the Sportage, although its EV platform means its wheelbase is slightly longer, so there's more room inside.

Said platform is the E-GMP one that underpins the EV3 and EV4, so it gets MacPherson struts at the front and a multi-link rear. There's an 81.4kWh battery and it will be launched with a front-mounted motor producing 214bhp and 218lb ft of torque. More potent dual-motor AWD and GT models will follow. Since the electrical system runs at 400V, the battery can be rapid-charged at speeds of 150kW.

Kia has yet to certify the range but is expecting 329 miles on a charge, which would be competitive. I was comfortably into the mid-4mpkWh range on a mixed test route in South Korea, suggesting that figure is achievable in the real world.

Inside, the EV5 sticks close to its siblings. That's no bad thing: you get the big combo of driver display and infotainment screens and a mix of physical and haptic buttons for various key functions, such as the climate control and multimedia. The materials feel plush without being posh and there are plenty of storage bins to suit family life.

The driving position is perched and upright even by SUV standards but gives a good view of the road.

There's decent room in the back (sadly Kia has traded the bench seat of Chinese EV5s for a more conventional second row) and the seats fold totally flat to expand the boot capacity from 550 to 1650 litres. The Sportage's boot is bigger, but the EV5 does have a 44-litre frunk.

My test car was specified in the Korean equivalent of mid-level GT-Line trim; entry-level Air and higher-grade GT-Line S versions will be offered too. Air models ride on 18in wheels while GT-Line models sit on 19in versions.

The EV5 is thoroughly pleasant to drive. Its powertrain is responsive and gets up to speed quickly, and it handles its 2092kg kerb weight well.

The latest version of Kia's i-Pedal system features four levels of regenerative braking and a selectable one-pedal mode.

The powertrain's refinement is also reflected in the handling, albeit with the caveat that our test car was running on traditionally softer Korean suspension.

The steering has enough weight to give confidence at speed, but it's still easy to navigate tight environs. Try to chuck it into corners and you won't find much in the way of dynamic reward.

It rides well, though, feeling settled and cushioned, which will surely be more important to buyers.

While the EV5 lacks a really compelling aspect that makes it stand out, it should be at the sharp end of the market. It drives pretty blamelessly, looks fairly distinctive, has a practical interior and contains tech that's easy to understand. Really, it's hard to seriously knock.

If that sounds familiar, that's because it's exactly what we said about the latest Sportage last week. Which is, you suspect, exactly what Kia was hoping for.

JAMES ATTWOOD

TECH SPEC

KIA EV5 GT-LINE

The closest thing to a Sportage with an electric motor. Pliant, amiable transport with few surprises

Price £42,595
Engine Permanent magnet synchronous motor
Power 214bhp
Torque 218lb ft
Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, FWD
Kerb weight 2092kg
0-62mph 8.5sec
Top speed 102mph
Battery 81.4kWh (total)
Range, economy 329 miles, 4.0mpkWh (est)
CO_2, tax band 0g/km, 3%
Rivals Renault Scenic, Tesla Model Y, VW ID 4

TESTED 29.9.25, PORTO, PORTUGAL **DELIVERIES** NOW

DS N°4 E-TENSE

Premium French brand overhauls its A-Class rival, adding an EV option…

DS is embarking on a new chapter by launching its second-generation model line-up, with the French premium brand's future resting on the shoulders of the all-new N°8 flagship crossover and this updated N°4 hatchback.

Previously called simply the 4, this has been the best-selling DS in the UK since its 2021 launch, albeit finding just 2303 homes.

Such low volumes make you wonder why DS remains committed to the UK, even if this is still its fifth-best-selling market – but new CEO Xavier Peugeot insists the brand is profitable and hopes its new line-up will help it become an influential player in Europe.

But how is DS going to achieve this when its rivals are selling tens of thousands of hatchbacks each year? Well, the brand is pinning its hopes on the N°4's fresh look and, for the first time, the option of a battery-electric powertrain, which we're testing here.

The N°4 E-Tense rides on the same Stellantis EMP2 platform as the Peugeot e-308 but gets a larger battery capacity of 58.3kWh and a more powerful front-mounted electric motor that makes 210bhp and 253lb ft of torque.

It can travel farther than its cousin, offering up to 279 miles of range, although it wasn't especially efficient on my 80-mile test route around sunny Porto. It achieved 3.6mpkWh, translating to a real-world range of 210 miles – a sizeable shortfall on the official figure.

As DS prioritises comfort over performance, it's no surprise that the N°4 isn't a particularly quick EV. It achieves 0-62mph in 7.1sec, making it slower than the entry-level Cupra Born (6.7sec) but quicker than the Volkswagen ID 3 (7.6sec).

The N°4 E-Tense builds speed in a linear fashion as opposed to the Born's zippier acceleration from a standstill. Pulling away from a junction in a spirited manner generates plenty of tyre squeal – a bit unrefined for a premium hatchback.

It's easy to guide along a set of right-left sweeps; just don't expect all that much excitement.

Peugeot e-408 has same powertrain but is half a second slower to 62mph

The steering is precise enough for casual driving, but there's lots of dead weight at the centre and its absence of feedback makes it feel very remote.

Grip is acceptable and body lean becomes excessive only if you push beyond reason.

The N°4 E-Tense is generally comfortable and deals with long-wave undulations well, but it never feels completely settled. There's a noticeable fuss and fidget, particularly at higher speeds. Present the car with harsh potholes and its suspension struggles to iron them out competently. At least it's pretty relaxed at a cruise – helped by an upmarket interior.

Soft-touch leather-like materials cover most key touchpoints, and our range-topping Étoile model's cabin was enhanced by Alcantara trim. Fit and finish was good, and I liked the patch of leather affixed to the centre console where you rest your knee.

There's now a 10.25in digital instrument cluster (up from 7.0in) and a 10in central touchscreen. Both are graphically strong, but while the infotainment software is

"It never feels completely settled, fussing and fidgeting noticeably, and it struggles to iron out potholes"

TESTER'S NOTE

As with many Stellantis EVs, you can adjust the strength of the regenerative braking via paddles behind the steering wheel. They're pretty aggressive in the highest setting, and the brake pedal has more feel when the regen is turned off. **SP**

Materials look and feel classy but interior has some practical flaws

N°4 E-Tense is not as fun as a Cupra Born on winding roads

well configured, it can be sluggish.

We often praise cars for having physical switchgear, but the row of buttons below the touchscreen here are poorly specified: none can be used to adjust the temperature or fan speed and you need to press three on-screen icons to turn on the heated seats.

While DS likes to boast about the N°4's generous proportions, rear accommodation isn't great by class standards. Sitting behind my own driving position (I'm 6ft tall), I had barely any head or leg room and I couldn't find a comfortable position even when slouching.

The 430-litre boot is at least a fair bit bigger than the Born's.

On to the matter of price. The entry-level Pallas starts at £36,995, while the range-topping Étoile costs £41,860. That makes it dearer than the Born and the Renault Megane, both of which offer a similar range.

Style seems to outweigh substance here, then. Despite being comfortable, relaxing and easy to drive, the N°4 E-Tense feels like a missed opportunity that is unlikely to challenge key rivals from Germany. Ambitious pricing, poor range and efficiency and substandard cabin ergonomics mean this EV probably won't be the sales hit DS is hoping for.

SAM PHILLIPS

TECH SPEC

DS N°4 E-TENSE ETOILE

Premium but pricey, comfortable but unstimulating. An average EV that lacks the range, space and affordability of its competitors

Price £41,860
Engine Permanent magnet synchronous motor
Power 210bhp
Torque 253lb ft
Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, FWD
Kerb weight 1793kg
0-62mph 7.1sec
Top speed 99mph
Battery 58.3kWh (usable)
Range, economy 279 miles, 4.1mpkWh
CO_2, tax band 0g/km, 3%
Rivals BMW iX1, Renault Megane

TESTED 30.9.25, PORTO, PORTUGAL **DELIVERIES** NOW

DS N°4 PLUG-IN HYBRID

...and improving PHEV's credentials

THE NEW N°4 isn't exclusively an EV: it can also be had with full hybrid and plug-in hybrid powertrains, like its predecessor.

The plug-in hybrid has been given some upgrades to make it more competitive in the premium PHEV market. The configuration is broadly similar to before in that it pairs a 176bhp 1.6-litre four-cylinder turbo petrol engine with a 109bhp electric motor, but it now uses a new seven-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox instead of an eight-speed torque-converter and the battery capacity has been increased from 12.4kWh to 14.6kWh, which has extended the electric-only range from 32 miles to 50 miles.

The N°4 PHEV is hushed and smooth in pure-EV mode but feels less refined when the engine kicks in. It gets pretty vocal, too, because the revs soar when you open the throttle. And all that noise doesn't translate to pace: it feels fairly staid.

Left to its own devices, the new gearbox works fine. But while you can change gear using the cheap-feeling paddles behind the steering wheel, they're not very responsive.

Little separates the PHEV from the E-Tense when it comes to ride and handling, but the steering does feel more naturally geared, albeit still lacking in feel, and the ride is pliant and comfortable in most settings, save for pothole-strewn urban streets.

Powertrain is not as slick as the EV's but the steering feels better

Unlike the EV, the hybrid and PHEV cars can be had in the rather oddly named Étoile Nappa Leather trim, adding even more plushness. Indeed, it feels right up there with an Audi or BMW in terms of perceived quality and premium feel – although those gripes about usability and space still apply.

Opt for this top trim and you will pay more than £44,000, while the cheapest N°4 PHEV comes in at £39,000. You could have the range-topping Audi A3 Sportback TFSIe for even less, with an electric range of 88 miles. Or there's the Mercedes-Benz A250e, which can do 51 miles for just over £41,000.

Sure, the N°4 PHEV is premium and smart-looking, but, as with the N°4 E-Tense, its high price and limited range stunt its appeal.

SAM PHILLIPS

TECH SPEC

DS N°4 PLUG-IN HYBRID ETOILE NAPPA LEATHER

Plush interior makes it feel like a luxo-barge but ambitious pricing and short electric range make it inferior to cheaper German rivals

Price £44,200
Engine 4 cyls in line, 1598cc, turbocharged, petrol, plus electric motor
Power 222bhp
Torque 265lb ft
Gearbox 7-spd dual-clutch automatic, FWD
Kerb weight 1693kg
0-62mph 7.4sec
Top speed 145mph
Battery 14.6kWh
Economy 97mpg
Electric range 50 miles
CO_2, tax band 59g/km, 17%
Rivals Mercedes-Benz A250e, VW Golf eTSI

TESTED 23.9.25, NORTH JUTLAND, DENMARK **DELIVERIES** DECEMBER

LEAPMOTOR B10

Stellantis's Chinese brand introduces Kia Sportage-sized electric SUV

Before we get into the question of what the new Leapmotor B10 is like, shall we remind ourselves of what Leapmotor is? This is a Chinese EV maker that has been around in its domestic market for a decade and had sold more than 400,000 vehicles globally before Stellantis bought a controlling stake in its export operation.

Stellantis wanted a budget EV brand to rival the likes of BYD, Dacia and MG; Leapmotor had the tech and affordability it needed and would benefit from its sprawling European dealership network. A tie-up made perfect sense.

The B10 is the third Leapmotor EV to go on sale in the UK, after the T03 city car and the Tesla Model Y-rivalling C10 SUV. At 4.5m long, it splits the difference between Skoda's Elroq and Enyaq in size but pricing of £31,495 (or less than £30k with the current 'Leap Grant' discount) means the MG S5 EV and Omoda E5 are its closest rivals in terms of price, size and range.

The B10 draws power from a CATL-sourced 67.1kWh lithium-iron-phosphate battery, which powers a rear-mounted, 215bhp electric motor for a WLTP range of 270 miles.

There's no four-wheel-drive variant in the UK; here the B10 is offered only with this rear-wheel-drive powertrain, and in one very well-equipped trim level complete with 168kW DC rapid charging, a heat pump (which improves efficiency) and vehicle-to-load functionality.

Regardless of its range, you won't want to go any distance in the B10 unless you turn the driver assistance systems off; driving with them on is like travelling with a malicious poltergeist on board. You wonder why the steering wheel is being tugged around when you're nowhere near white lines, yellow lines or indeed any lines at all. It beeps at everything: a change in speed limit, breaking the speed limit, no speed limit, some speed limit, unnecessary blinking, not enough coffee in the driver, too much coffee in the driver, glancing at the touchscreen, bad breath, unfashionable clothes, poor conversational skills… I'm quite sure there are more.

Of course, Leapmotor is far from alone in suffering from this issue, but other manufacturers prove that active safety tech can be much more subtle and helpful.

Critically, you can control the B10's ADAS stuff via a shortcut button on the steering wheel, so it's not difficult to turn them off – at which point you are at your leisure to enjoy the breathtakingly forgettable dynamics.

The acceleration, steering and three regenerative braking modes

New tyres should go some way to addressing unspectacular dynamics

TESTER'S NOTE
The rocker switches for the windows are where you expect them to be, on the doors, but they do the opposite of what you expect, lowering the windows when pushed forward. **VP**

Airy cabin is spacious and perceived quality is good for the price

"Once you've turned off the intrusive ADAS, you're at leisure to enjoy the breathtakingly forgettable dynamics"

are all controlled independently via a Tesla-esque touchscreen layout. With the acceleration in Comfort mode, the pedal is long and soggy, so it all feels too obviously neutered. Similarly, in the steering's most relaxed mode, it's overly light, if predictable.

In the happy medium or Sport settings, things improve and the B10 is perfectly pleasant, with more robust responses and enough urgency in the way that it goes down the road.

Despite modest performance, the 18in Linglong Sport Master tyres fitted to our test car did slip in moderately urgent getaways, even in dry conditions, so factor in the cost of new tyres. Mind you, Leapmotor has told us that B10s ordered after production ramps up in 2026 will have Hankook tyres.

The defining characteristic of the B10's driving dynamics is its loose-limbed ride comfort. It eases over bigger bumps, and while there's some patter and thump over coarse surfaces, it's an unashamedly comfort-oriented car, which is fair enough.

As long as you don't mind a lot of body lean and pitch and quite a bit of wind noise on the motorway, the B10 is an inoffensive conveyance.

More impressive than the dynamics is the interior. The pale faux leather and standard panoramic glass roof make it light and airy, and the perceived quality isn't too bad, although the flip-down cupholders feel flimsy and there's not enough lumbar support for the driver. You do get standard heated and ventilated seats, though.

A simple digital speedo is a welcome feature, as is a steering wheel that adjusts manually for rake and reach and wiper and indicator controls located on a conventional stalk.

Everything else is controlled via the 14.6in touchscreen, which responds quickly enough, but the air-conditioning controls can be fiddly and it will all take some familiarisation, despite various shortcuts. Naturally, there's sat-nav and online streaming services, voice control, wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto and the capacity for over-the-air software updates.

Space in the back is good, and while the rear seats don't slide or recline, there's plenty of leg and head room even for taller adults, plus a centre armrest. There's no light back there, though, which will be really irritating if you have young kids and fiddly car seats.

Blip the powered tailgate and you reveal a decent, squared-off boot with 430 litres of space, including some underfloor storage. Good enough for most families but a way off class best, that boot space is almost the same as you get in the dinkier Renault 4. There is a small frunk as well, though.

Overall, the B10 feels like a lot of car for the money, with a longer range, faster charging and more equipment than most EVs at this price, but it demands compromises.

Monthly PCP finance and lease deals have yet to be confirmed, and it will be those that make or break the B10's success. Ultimately, they need to be low, because a smaller but still useful family EV from a more familiar brand feels like a better option in all but the financial sense.

VICKY PARROTT

TECH SPEC

LEAPMOTOR B10

Cost is the only reason to buy the B10; in most other aspects, it's just plain adequate. You will need to turn off the overly intrusive ADAS to get the best from it

Price £31,495
Engine Permanent magnet synchronous motor
Power 215bhp
Torque 177lb ft
Gearbox 1-spd reduction gear, RWD
Kerb weight 1845kg
0-62mph 8.0sec
Top speed 106mph
Battery 67.1kWh (usable)
Range, economy 270 miles, 4.0mpkWh
CO_2, tax band 0g/km, 3%
Rivals MG S5 EV, Omoda E5, Skoda Elroq

ROAD TESTS

AUTOCAR ROAD TEST 5779

BMW 7 SERIES

Munich's latest limo finally meets our timing gear, in full-size PHEV form

MODEL TESTED
BMW 750E xDRIVE M SPORT
Price £110,210
Power 483bhp
Torque 516lb ft
0-60mph 4.8sec
30-70mph 4.2sec
Top speed 155mph (claimed)
Average economy 53.1mpg
Electric range 47 miles
CO_2 emissions 24g/km
70-0mph 46.3m (18deg C, dry)

While it isn't like the maker of a Teutonic limousine to leave much to chance, there is evidence that the creators of the latest 7 Series – which, following a long-delayed arrival on BMW's demo fleet, now finally undergoes an Autocar road test with a combustion engine under its bonnet – courted old-fashioned good fortune in just about every way they could.

The number seven is considered lucky the world over – and in China, one of BMW's biggest global markets for the 7 Series, particularly so. It just so happens, then, that this, the seventh model generation of the car, is codenamed G70. It has been in development since 2017. BMW makes seven versions of it (leaving out the i7 but counting the armoured 7 Series Protection). And it entered production on the first day of the seventh calendar month of 2022 – seven years to the day after the sixth-generation car had done so.

With diesel and (even mild-hybrid) petrol options studiously omitted from the UK range, however, the choice for those of us who don't want an electric i7 is between two plug-in hybrids: a 483bhp 750e xDrive (which qualifies for benefit-in-kind tax at less than 10% of its showroom price) and a 564bhp M760e xDrive (which, since it emits more than 50g/km of CO_2, isn't so tax-efficient). We elected to test the former.

DESIGN & ENGINEERING

★★★⯪☆

PROS Has the advanced suspension and steering tech to marshal its heft; plenty of power and electric range
CONS Being uncompromisingly large and tech-laden inevitably makes it heavy; 'designed in Minecraft' styling is hard to warm to

Unlike with previous generations of the 7 Series, there is only one wheelbase available on this car. So exactly how controversial – revealing, even – should we consider it, for a brand like BMW, that the version it omitted was the short wheelbase?

This car now isn't remotely modest in size – even by long-wheelbase limo norms. It's almost 100mm longer overall than Mercedes' long-wheelbase S-Class, and more than 70mm longer than a Bentley Flying Spur.

Upper-tier versions of the car come with Integral Active (read active four-wheel) steering as standard, as a means of mitigating that outright size. Our 750e test car had that as an option – in addition to active anti-roll bars (which BMW bundles into another option pack called Executive Drive Suspension). Adaptive air suspension is standard fit – itself a departure on a car that used to offer steel coil suspension in opposition to its air-sprung rivals, as a gesture to those who might prefer a more connected-feeling ride.

Mk1 7 Series (E23) also had a straight six

The car is founded on the same Cluster Architecture (CLAR) as the current 5 Series, iX and X3 – a development of that of the old 7 Series – and so it has a unitary-style chassis made of a mix of aluminium, steel and carbonfibre composite. A longitudinal engine connects to a gearbox-mounted electric drive motor for the hybrid system, with the battery carried under the cabin floor. Both UK-market PHEVs use xDrive mechanical four-wheel drive.

Our 750e test car weighed 2472kg on the proving ground scales, but outright mass is not the only apparent cost of its size and fitted technology: the weight distribution, at 53:47 front to rear as tested, also proved a little un-BMW-like.

And that's to say nothing of its particular exterior design, which is of course a subjective factor. For what it's worth, most testers found it more troubling than challenging – and none a selling point.

INTERIOR

★★★★⯪

PROS More second-row lounging space than key rivals; great interior richness and tactile quality; excellent seat comfort and ergonomic layout
CONS Lots of ambient lighting and digital glare can be distracting

Our test car was quite modestly equipped, missing both BMW's Theatre Screen rear-seat entertainment package and its Executive Lounge seat option (which allows you to extend and incline the cushion on the passenger side, and recline the seatback slightly).

Both were fitted to the i7 we tested in 2023, however, and so we already know that, while it isn't quite in the league of a Mercedes-Maybach S-Class or Lexus LM for sleeping-seat-style travelling comfort, this car wants for little in the way it can cater to those all-important patrons in the second row.

Even without those options, it conjures a special ambience for those rear-seat travellers. This is especially the case at night, when its ambient-lit audio speakers glow invitingly behind their laser-cut metal grilles, and its filament-lit Sky Lounge glass roof gives off futuristic, Tron Legacy vibes.

Each back-row passenger has a smartphone-sized touchscreen in their door console to control entertainment options, lighting and seat heating. The seats themselves don't adjust for angle or extend in the cushion as standard, but they feel thick, soft and supportive under your backside, and leave you with abundant space and 880mm of rear leg room (Mercedes-Benz S580e L: 860mm, Rolls-Royce Ghost S2 Black Badge: 840mm). The sheer size of this car certainly pays off in that respect.

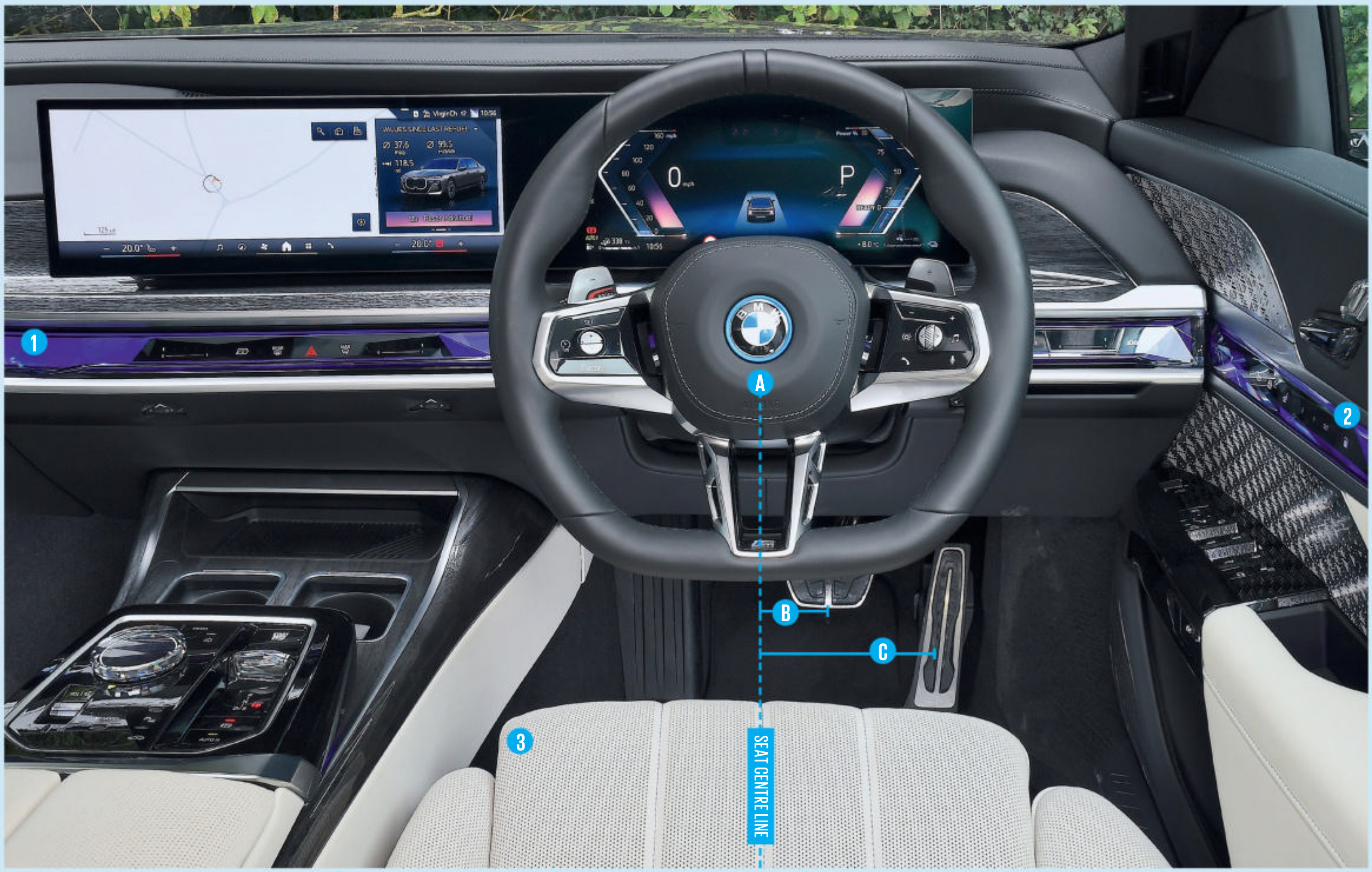
Up front, there's a lot more material chintz and digital razzle-dazzle about the 7 Series' cabin ambience than it ever used to trade on – enough to match Mercedes' equally flashy S-Class – with the controversial, colour-selectable 'interaction bar' lighting element competing hardest for your attention. Quite what it looks like (opinions ranged from a layer of molten kryptonite within a continental shelf, to less complimentary sentiments) can be debated. Less subjectively, we found the way that its surface reflects light during the day problematic, since it also carries key secondary controls that can become hard to spot.

Beneath the glossy attention-grabbing first impression, however, the 7 Series' cabin has the excellent tactile quality you would expect for the money, and its driving position is excellent, very comfortable and widely adjustable. It's a fully committed, technologically avant-garde, 21st-century luxury proposition of some ambition, and doesn't risk selling itself short in any respect. ▸

■ BMW's £2510 M Sport Pro option pack puts this bootlid spoiler on the car, as well as plenty of other 'high-gloss shadowline' black body trim. We would spend the money elsewhere.

■ Four-wheel steering can put up to 5deg of rear steer into the chassis in emergency situations, but typically goes to only 3.5deg when manoeuvring (as seen above).

PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN BRADSHAW



① Illuminated 'interaction bar' can be more garish than this – in multi-coloured Sport mode – or less so. It's always fairly bright, though, which can be unhelpful after dark.

② The 'button' to depressurise the fuel tank, and open the filler, is to the driver's right, behind the memory seat controls. It can be hard to find when that glossy plastic is reflecting daylight.

③ Smoke White merino hide, part of the BMW Individual interior pack (a no-cost option), shows dirty smudges but looks great when clean. Veganza synthetic leather is standard.

WHEEL AND PEDAL ALIGNMENT Ⓐ Steering offset 0mm Ⓑ Brake offset 45mm right Ⓒ Accelerator offset 180mm right. Accelerator is slightly less offset than in an S-Class. Steering column adjustment is electric and done automatically, saved to your BMW ID and can be selected on entry.

MULTIMEDIA

★★★★⯪

PROS Digital tech for second-row travellers is class-leading; infotainment has good usability and plenty of physical shortcuts

CONS Lots of sub-menus to navigate, some pretty superfluous

Option up BMW's 31in, roof-mounted Theatre Screen video console, with its Amazon Prime TV integration, and your VIP passengers in the back should want for nothing as regards entertainment on a long journey.

Up front, BMW's Live Cockpit Professional infotainment system remains one you can operate either via the screen itself, using the iDrive cursor controller, or by voice command. It has good top-level responsiveness and usability, with a primary nav bar at the foot of the 12.3in screen, a customisable home screen and useful physical menu keys on the centre console. Voice control, for us, was a bit hit and miss in recognising key commands.

The system does seem to have a lot of sub-menu screens, so you find yourself hitting 'home' a lot – but thanks to those menu shortcut keys, main ADAS functions are easy to access and disable. Some of the system's screens can be a little needlessly bright and glare-heavy, but overall it's an impressive, quite sophisticated set-up.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★⯪

PROS Great smoothness and easy drivability; quick and responsive when it needs to be

CONS Hybrid driveline forgets its manners when you prod it hard

If you were developing the ideal chauffeur's PHEV for 2025, a BMW turbo straight six might well be the engine you would choose for it, given its many celebrated running refinement qualities.

And in this car, the straight six meets all of those lofty expectations. It starts and stops smoothly enough to barely be noticed; it raises its voice just loudly enough for a sweet six-cylinder hum to be detected when 'S' mode is selected on the cut-glass drive selector. And, if you keep to a fairly laid-back pace, with your inputs progressive rather than hurried, it only ever blends with the car's electric motor suavely. Press the powertrain to full power, however, and some hints of abruptness begin to present, such as gearchanges becoming snatchier.

In outright terms, the 750e demonstrates plenty of accessible thrust and outright punching power when called to. It out-accelerated the more powerful Mercedes-Benz S580e L we tested in 2022 over every major benchmark save the 30-70mph sprint; likewise the Range Rover P550e we tested in April this year, with the same exception. The M760e extends the PHEV 7 Series' performance potential even further, should you want that.

The car's 17.6kWh (usable capacity) drive battery lent it an electric test range of 47 miles in mixed use (slightly longer than both the Mercedes and Range Rover managed), which it tends to deploy judiciously when you have a navigation destination set, in order to get the most benefit from it. Or you can simply exhaust it during urban driving, before leaning on the combustion engine.

However it's powered, accelerator response is suitably gradual, and brake pedal tuning is medium-soft but correspondingly progressive, without any perceptible change in pedal feel as regen turns into friction braking.

HANDLING & STABILITY

★★★★☆

PROS Surprisingly manoeuvrable at low speeds; has good composure at typical road speeds

CONS Little more sporting dynamism here than the class average

The 7 Series' four-wheel steering system does indeed hide its outright size very cleverly at low speed. It's surprisingly easy to swing into a driveway or parking bay, and wieldy in a three-point turn. Owners with urban use in mind should certainly consider four-wheel steering a key option.

At greater speed, the car has the fairly lightly weighted controls and gentle chassis responses you would expect of it, though perhaps not of a car gesturing to be the default interested driver's choice. This 7 Series' priorities are simply elsewhere – and we will come to describe some of them in more detail shortly.

While not wallowy, it certainly feels medium-soft, and quite pillowy and compliant in how it goes down a country road. It keeps a level, isolated body very cleverly at ordinary speeds, but clearly doesn't do so for the sake of any sense of connection with the road surface, or particular engagement of the driver.

Rather than unearthing some hitherto buried sense of poise when you push the car beyond that everyday pace, you certainly feel like you're taking the 7 Series out of its comfort zone when you hurry it. The nose starts to bob a little; front-axle loading starts to ebb and flow; understeer gently builds into the handling mix; and, however you drive, the DSC system – which, unusually in a BMW, isn't switchable or tunable beyond the engagement of Sport driving mode – simply gets busier and more proactive to keep so much mass and energy safely in check.

COMFORT & ISOLATION

★★★★⯪

PROS Isolation and refinement are great, engine off or on; ride is quiet and supple almost all of the time

CONS Still not quite as hushed as the quietest rivals

While it might be a slightly different sort of limousine from the one that owners of its various forebears expect, the 7 Series is plainly very effective at what it does. Although it rode on optional 21in wheels, our test car had excellent ride isolation and bump-thump absorption, which it took a really nasty bit of broken asphalt or aggressive drain cover to trouble.

It doesn't quite float buoyantly down the road but makes a clear attempt to hover over the surface – declining to heave and roll, yet filtering out the impact of lumps and bumps from the gutter almost completely, thanks to its clever active anti-roll bars.

Nothing can ride perfectly – and there are limits to the absorptiveness of the car's suspension, which you will encounter when it occasionally runs short of wheel travel over a bigger bump, causing a heavy body to suddenly bristle a bit. All the same, this car's combination of secondary isolation and primary levelness and composure is very impressive indeed.

At a 50mph cruise on Horiba MIRA's mile straights, we recorded 59dBA of cabin noise, matching the performance of the S580e L exactly. The Mercedes was a decibel quieter at both 30mph and 70mph, to give it its due. Nevertheless, you can tell how much effort BMW has invested in putting this car on a par with its most refined rivals and, subjectively at the very least, you would say that hasn't been wasted effort.

ASSISTED DRIVING

★★★★⯪

PROS Sophisticated tech isn't intrusive; good top-level access to disable systems and good options to tune others

CONS It has autonomy capabilities that aren't legal to use in the UK

BMW hailed the 7 Series' driver assistance technology as the most advanced it had ever fitted to a production car in 2022. Its many ADAS cameras, from Mobileye, have particularly advanced object- and hazard-detection. In certain global markets (the UK not included) they already facilitate limited level-four hands-off driving.

Our test car came with both Driving Assist Professional and Parking Assistant Pro as part of a £5775 options pack. The former delivers a motorway lane keeping system and the latter makes getting out of tight parking spaces or underground car parks easy.

The car's ADAS features do seem quite advanced, and BMW is careful to make them easy to disable. Our car's lane keeping system was indeed effective, and dependable with its lane perception, on the motorway; its driver monitoring system never bothered us; and most of its systems are gratifyingly customisable – so you can switch things like the 'undertaking' prevention on and off, or set a particular speed limit tolerance for the intelligent cruise control.

BUYING & OWNING

★★★★☆

PROS 750e beats key rivals for electric running and emissions

CONS It makes for a high entry price for a combustion-engined car

While you can still buy an Audi A8 for less than £90,000, the 7 Series opens for business at just under £102k – and that's with the entry-level i7. The cheapest 750e costs from a little below £106k – itself meaningfully more expensive than the most accessible Mercedes S-Class, the mild-hybrid S350d L. So, even as the lesser of two PHEV models, this is an unapologetically expensive proposition, and can afford few weaknesses.

Since manufacturers are still working their way through the Euro 6e-bis emissions and economy certification that all PHEVs must pass by 2026 – and as the UK decides how it will soften the impact of that legislation for both manufacturers and company car tax payers here – it remains difficult to be sure about benefit-in-kind qualification for cars like this. With the information available at the time of writing, however, the 750e's 24g/km CO_2 emissions and 49-mile electric range, according to the WLTP test cycle, seem to stand it in good stead compared with its key rivals, at least one of which (the Mercedes S450e L) seems to be facing a potentially punitive expulsion from the sub-50g/km club.

The 750e got very close to reproducing that WLTP electric range result in mixed testing, beating the real-world return we saw from the 31.8kWh Range Rover P550e we tested back in April (albeit in notably chillier temperatures). ▸

FRONT Leg room 1110mm, head room 970mm. There's plenty of space for the driver, good visibility and a driving position that doesn't feel perched.

REAR Leg room 880mm, head room 950mm. A long-wheelbase S-Class is put in the shade for both rear leg room and head room.

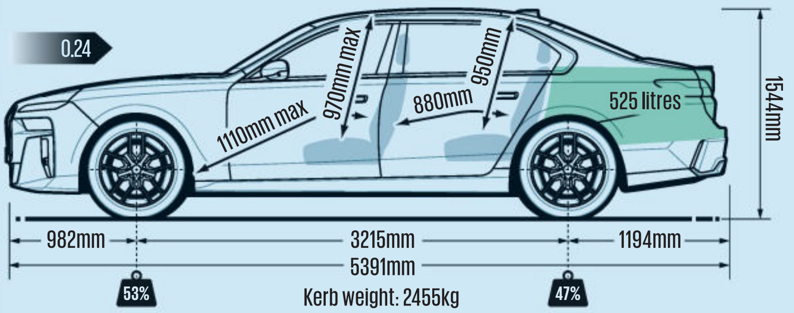
BOOT Length 1130mm, width 780-1230mm, height 530mm. Boot space is a useful 525 litres. Mercedes and Audi hybrid rivals offer less than 400 litres.

> "It feels pillowy and compliant going down a country road"

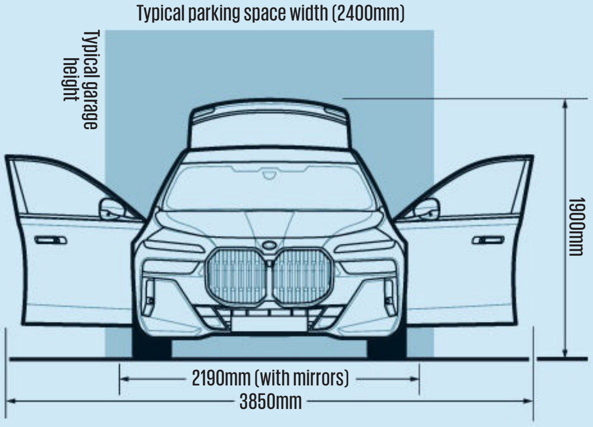
TEST RESULTS

DIMENSIONS

Length 5391mm **Width** 2190mm/1950mm (with/without mirrors) **Height** 1544mm **Door span** 3850mm **Max height to open bootlid** 1900mm


0.24
1110mm max
970mm max
880mm
950mm
525 litres
1544mm
982mm
3215mm
5391mm
1194mm
53%
47%
Kerb weight: 2455kg

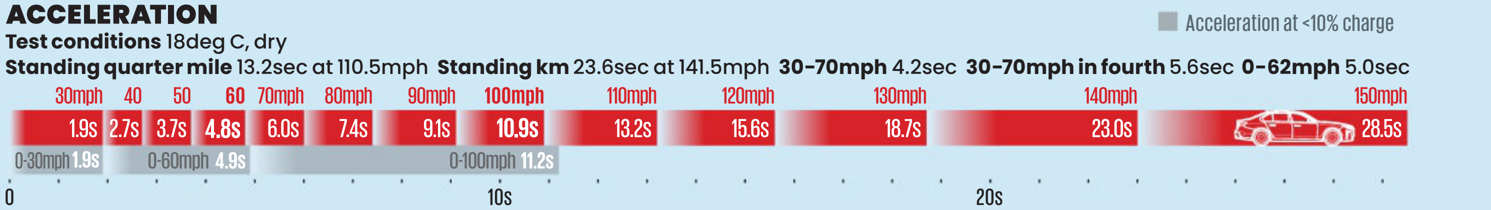
PARKING


Typical parking space width (2400mm)
Typical garage height
1900mm
2190mm (with mirrors)
3850mm

ACCELERATION

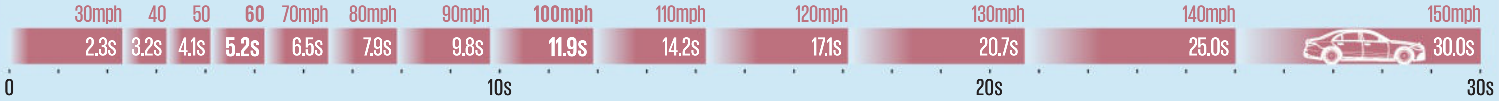
Test conditions 18deg C, dry

Standing quarter mile 13.2sec at 110.5mph **Standing km** 23.6sec at 141.5mph **30-70mph** 4.2sec **30-70mph in fourth** 5.6sec **0-62mph** 5.0sec



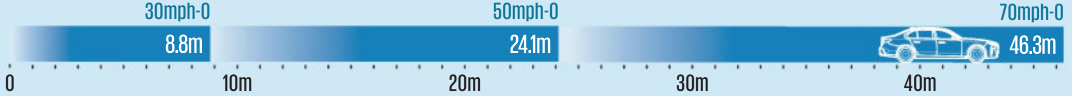
Mercedes-Benz S580e L AMG Line Premium Plus Executive (2022, 8.5deg C, dry)

Standing quarter mile 13.6sec at 107.6mph **Standing km** 24.4sec at 138.5mph **30-70mph** 4.2sec **30-70mph in fourth** 6.4sec

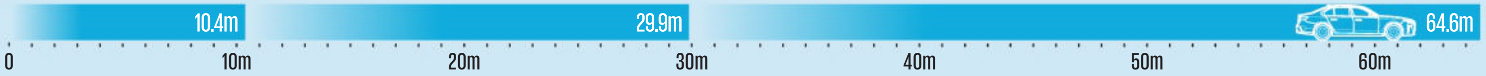


BRAKING

Dry 60-0mph 2.57sec



Wet 60-0mph 3.25sec

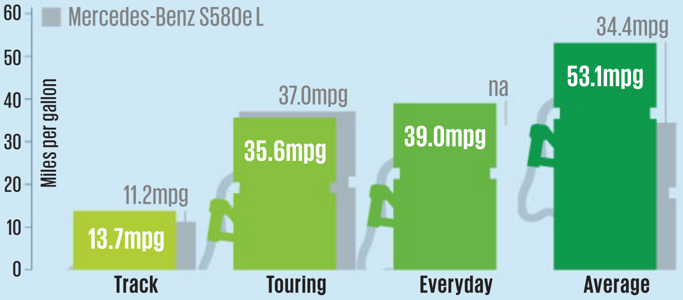


ACCELERATION IN GEAR

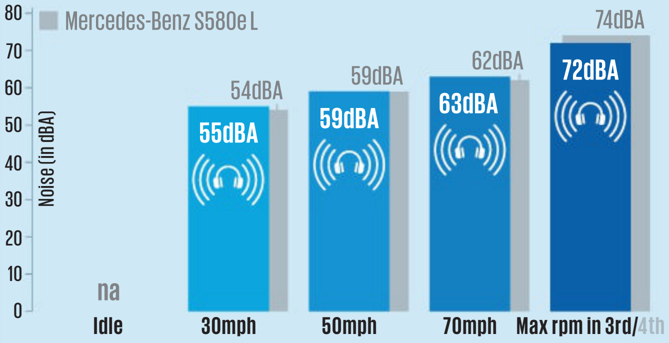
mph	Time (sec)						
	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
20-40	1.5	2.2					
30-50	1.7	2.2	2.8				
40-60		2.2	2.8	3.6	4.6		
50-70		2.3	2.8	3.7	4.7	5.9	
60-80		2.6	2.9	3.8	4.9	6.1	8.4
70-90			3.0	3.9	5.1	6.3	8.8
80-100			3.5	3.9	5.4	6.7	9.4
90-110			4.3	4.1	5.5	7.3	10.2
100-120				4.5	5.7	7.7	11.1
110-130				5.4	6.0	8.2	

RUNNING EFFICIENCY

WLTP 256.8mpg (combined) **Test range** 806/556/605 miles (average/touring/everyday) **Electric test range** 47 miles

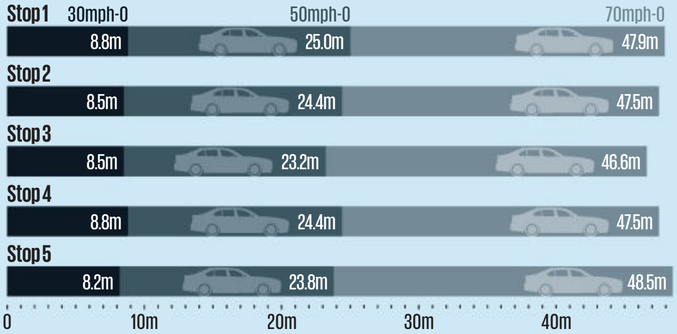


CABIN NOISE



BRAKING ENDURANCE

Fade variance 70-0m – stop 1 vs stop 5: 0.6m



THE SMALL PRINT Power-to-weight and torque-to-weight figures are calculated using manufacturer's claimed kerb weight. Running efficiency is tested on a closed test track; 'touring' is representative of UK motorway driving, 'everyday' of intra-urban driving. Acceleration, braking and cabin noise are measured on reference surfaces, for cabin noise using a handheld decibel meter. Charging equipment may vary, but charger power always exceeds the advertised peak draw of the test car, unless stated. Second-row leg room is typical, measured behind a driver's seat set for 1000mm of leg room. © 2025, Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Test results may not be reproduced without editor's written permission.

PETER LIDDIARD

MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATION

BMW 750E xDRIVE M SPORT

On-the-road price £110,210
Price as tested £130,652
Value after 3yrs/36k miles £60,690
Contract hire £1206 pcm (£7234 deposit + 36 months/30,000 miles)
Typical PCP £1499 pcm (£16,775 deposit + 48 months/40,000 miles)
Insurance group 50

FITTED EQUIPMENT

Standard Four-zone climate control, front and rear seat heating, BMW Live Cockpit Professional with head-up display, Bowers & Wilkins surround audio, adaptive air suspension **Optional** M Sport Pro pack £2510, Front Comfort pack £2625, Integral Active Steering £1250, Executive Drive Suspension £2600, automatic doors £1485, Technology Plus pack £5775, Sky Lounge pack £890 **Also available** Executive pack £11,025, Ultimate pack £29,400

HYBRID POWERTRAIN

Engine Front, longitudinal, 4WD
Type 6 cyls in line, 2998cc, turbo, petrol; 309bhp, 332lb ft
Motor Separately excited synchronous motor; 195bhp, 206lb ft
Battery type NMC **Capacity** 22.1/17.6kWh (total/usable) **Voltage** 400V
Total power 483bhp
Total torque 516lb ft
Power to weight 197bhp per tonne
Torque to weight 210lb ft per tonne

GEARBOX

Type 8-spd automatic
Ratios/mph per 1000rpm
1st 5.50/5.1 **2nd** 3.52/7.9 **3rd** 2.20/12.7 **4th** 1.72/16.2 **5th** 1.30/21.4 **6th** 1.00/27.9 **7th** 0.83/33.6 **8th** 0.64/43.5
Final drive ratio 3.01:1 **rpm in top gear at 70/80mph** 1608/1838

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction Steel/aluminium/carbon-composite unitary chassis
Weight/as tested 2455kg/2472kg
Weight distribution (f/r) 53%/47%
Drag coefficient 0.24 **Wheels** 9.5Jx21in (f), 10.5Jx21in (r) **Tyres** 255/40 R21 102Y (f), 285/35 R21 105Y (r), Pirelli P Zero **Spare** None (mobility foam)
Fuel tank 65 litres (under rear seats, filler on offside rear wing)

SUSPENSION & STEERING

Front Double wishbones, air springs, active anti-roll bar **Rear** Multi-link, air springs, active anti-roll bar
Steering EPAS, rack and pinion, with active 4WS; 2.4 turns lock to lock; 12.3m turning circle

BRAKES

Front 395mm ventilated discs, four-piston calipers **Rear** 370mm ventilated discs, single-piston calipers **Handbrake type** Electronic

EMISSIONS & TAX

CO_2 24g/km
BIK at 20/40% pcm £165/£331

VERDICT

Look beyond its design for a highly accomplished limo

★★★★⯪

The significance of this seventh-generation BMW 7 Series is hard to overstate. It has incorporated EV propulsion and in the UK excised itself of diesel.

But perhaps only when you consider a more classically powered version do you see how much more widely it has changed. It's not only a larger executive saloon now but also one with a different agenda focused on luxury and refinement; performance blended with electrified efficiency; and digital tech embraced with real enthusiasm.

More traditional core BMW qualities have been made secondary considerations, and the old car's ability to handle at speed has been traded off.

What has been produced, however (beyond what remains a deeply challenging, but subjective, exterior design), is a car of laser-targeted dynamic strengths, and unmistakable fitness for purpose.

TESTERS' NOTES

MATT SAUNDERS
Twenty years ago, both a 7 Series and an XJ could out-handle an S-Class. The Jag has now gone and the BMW has finally followed the Merc's dynamic lead. It shows which car had the right dynamic priorities all along.

RICHARD LANE
The 750e has a way of eking out its electric range on a longer journey, rather than using it all in one lump – and it works. After a full charge, on a motorway-intensive 100-mile trip, you can still see a return of close to 75mpg.

FACELIFT FIXES

- Tone down the combined glare of the 'interaction bar' and infotainment screens.
- Redesign that front end, grille included.
- Broaden the UK model line-up, if doing so can drive down the entry price or boost driver appeal.

RANKING RIVALS

	1 BMW 750E xDRIVE M SPORT	2 MERCEDES S450E L AMG LINE PREMIUM	3 RANGE ROVER P460E AUTOBIOGRAPHY	4 AUDI A8 L TFSIe 60 S LINE	BENTLEY FLYING SPUR V8 HYBRID	DENZA Z9 GT SUPER DM
		More luxurious than the 7 Series in some ways, but the six-pot powertrain and ride aren't quite as good.	One of few SUVs that pass muster for chauffeuring. LWB is huge, enticing – and expensive.	Older than German rivals; short on EV range. Interior lacks their tech but has real tactile quality.	We have yet to test the lower-rung Spur PHEV. Sub-Speed pricing just about puts it in the frame.	BYD's incoming exec PHEV is more Panamera rival than limo but should offer plenty for the money.
		★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★⯪☆		
Price		£111,685	£137,545	£102,730	£190,365	£80,000 (est)
Power, torque		403bhp, 479lb ft	454bhp, 487lb ft	456bhp, 516lb ft	671bhp, 686lb ft	858bhp, 834lb ft
0-62mph, top speed		5.9sec, 155mph	5.6sec, 140mph	4.7sec, 155mph	3.9sec, 168mph	3.6sec, 143mph
CO_2, economy*		58g/km, 108.7mpg	20g/km, 324.7mpg	45g/km, 143.7mpg	33g/km, 85.6mpg	na

*CO_2 and economy for PHEVs are correct at time of publication but subject to change owing to re-homologation under the Euro 6e-bis standard

AUTOCAR **ROAD TEST 5780**

VOLVO XC60

Can a life-extending update keep Volvo's stalwart SUV in contention?

The Volvo XC60 is a product of a company in improvisation mode. Remember, Volvo was committed to going electric-only by 2030, so one imagines that its development programmes for combustion-engined models have been a low priority for a while.

But as we all know, EV sales haven't quite become the all-conquering dominant force that some were expecting, and combustion-engined models are having to be parachuted in left, right and centre.

For Porsche, that means working its magic on a shared group platform. For Volvo, it means giving some of its family favourites a light refresh, and sending them back out on the battlefield.

Volvo has a history of keeping models around for many years, which seems to serve it well: in 2024, more XC60s found owners than in 2018, and it outsold both the BMW X3 and Audi Q5.

Those German rivals have just entered entirely new generations, so now it's up to the XC60 to prove it can keep up.

DESIGN & ENGINEERING

★★★⯪☆

PROS Still a handsome design; fairly clever battery packaging

CONS Relatively small PHEV battery; isn't it time for something new by now?

When the second generation of the XC60 was launched in 2017, Volvo was on a roll. With a fresh platform developed using Geely money, it released an all-new XC90, V90, V60 and this XC60 in quick succession. The long-running characteristic five-cylinder engines were out, and in went a new family of petrol, diesel and plug-in hybrid four-cylinders. Neat Scandi styling, interior quality from the class above and a very novel touchscreen-based user interface concept (that actually worked remarkably well) helped it become a true competitor to the German premium brands.

Over the years, the engine line-up was gradually hybridised. For 2025, the diesels have been killed off completely, leaving the B5, with its 2.0-litre mild-hybrid turbocharged petrol engine and four-wheel drive, as the only non-plug-in option.

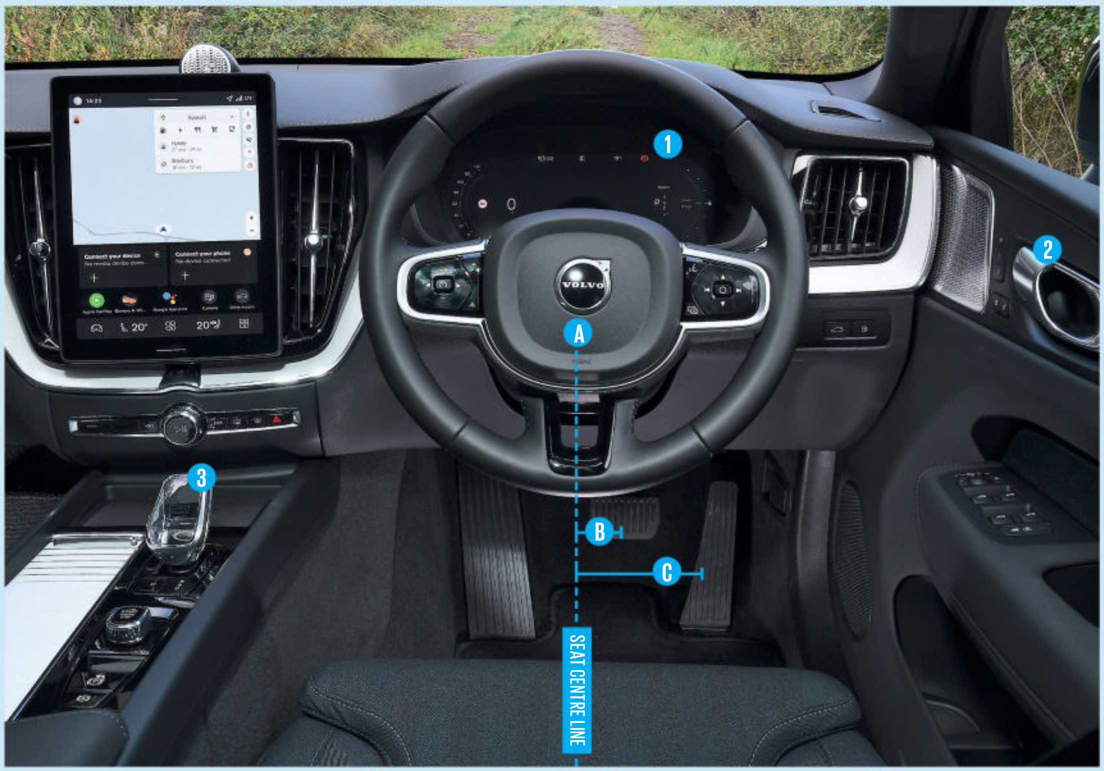
Then there are the two plug-in hybrids: the T6 and the T8. Both use a version of the same turbocharged 2.0-litre engine with an integrated starter-generator, albeit in a different state of tune. They run a slightly lower compression ratio than on the B5, yet put out more power (T6: 249bhp, T8: 306bhp). Previous iterations used a novel but very complicated twin-charged version (with a turbocharger and a supercharger), but that was abandoned in 2023 as the latest electric motor is sufficiently able to fill in the turbo lag.

MODEL TESTED
VOLVO XC60 T8 ULTRA
Price £68,860
Power 449bhp
Torque 523lb ft
0-60mph 4.6sec
30-70mph 4.1sec
Top speed 112mph (claimed)
Average economy 43.3mpg
Electric range 40 miles
CO_2 emissions 23g/km
70-0mph 43.8m (19deg C, dry)

① The only options for the driver display are this minimal power gauge and speedo, or a large map. The screen space could be used much more efficiently.

② Interior door handles are made of metal, and the doors release with a mechanical clunk, which is much more satisfying and reassuring than any electronic release.

③ You push and pull the drive selector for Reverse and Drive. Instead of shift paddles, you push the drive selector left and right. It works, but isn't very intuitive.



WHEEL AND PEDAL ALIGNMENT Ⓐ Steering offset 0mm Ⓑ Brake offset 60mm right Ⓒ Accelerator offset 200mm right. Pedals are somewhat offset to the right. Floor-hinged accelerator pedal is a nice touch.

Said electric motor sits on the rear axle and puts out 143bhp and 228lb ft (up from 87bhp and 177lb ft before 2023). It draws power from a lithium ion battery that isn't located under the cabin floor, as in most PHEVs, but sits down the spine of the car, in the 'transmission tunnel'. The battery was also upgraded a few years ago, from just 11.6kWh to 14.9kWh. Arguably it's due for another update, since the BMW X3 30e comes with 19.7kWh and the Mercedes-Benz GLC 300e 25.3kWh.

Visual updates for 2025 are limited to new colour and wheel options, smoked rear lights and a new front grille with a criss-cross pattern. The trim level structure has been revised to Core, Plus, Plus Pro and Ultra. Plus and Plus Pro get a sportier look and black detailing, and Ultra buyers can choose between 'bright' and 'dark' styling.

INTERIOR

★★★★☆

PROS Materials and build; space; seat comfort
CONS Lack of physical controls; some infotainment gripes

The biggest change for 2025 is inside, where the XC60 receives a new generation of infotainment system, including a larger central touchscreen. Where the old one was neatly integrated into the dashboard, the new one sits slightly proud, though it's still nowhere near as overbearing as some.

As before, it's based on Android Automotive, but this latest version is similar to the one found in the EX90. In this XC60, we didn't experience any of the glitchiness and input lag that we did with older XC60s or the EX90, so it appears that Volvo's software is improving.

It needed to, given almost everything is controlled through it – albeit not as much as on an EX90. The XC60 mercifully retains more buttons on the steering wheel, and for the mirror adjustment.

The interface generally feels fairly cohesive, and having Google Maps as the native navigation is very useful. Even so, climate is controlled through the screen, some of the menus are still needlessly confusing, the 'contextual shortcut' bar that guesses which functions you're likely to need gets it wrong more often than not, and while there is both Android Auto and Apple CarPlay, both require a cable.

Otherwise, the interior is mostly as it was, which means it is classy and comfortable. We noted in our original 2017 road test that the XC60's interior quality felt like it was from the class above because it was largely lifted straight from the XC90, and that applies more than ever today, as rivals have had their tactile materials replaced with touchscreens and gloss black plastic. Instead, the XC60 sticks with bright wood and real metal and glass.

Apart from a slight lack of oddment storage, the XC60's cabin still compares very favourably with rivals for outright accommodation. The front seats are outstandingly comfortable and very widely adjustable, while rear passengers enjoy more leg room than in the Mercedes GLC or Audi Q5, with a comfortable seating position that is uncompromised by a high floor (since the battery isn't below it). The boot is equal in size to that of the GLC 300e, and much bigger than a Q5 E-hybrid's, with some underfloor cable storage. The rear motor does mean that plug-in hybrids can't be optioned with a spacesaver spare wheel, like the mild hybrid can. ▸

■ The second-gen XC60 has only ever been available with four-cylinder engines. Diesels are out for 2025, leaving just one mild-hybrid petrol and two plug-in hybrids.

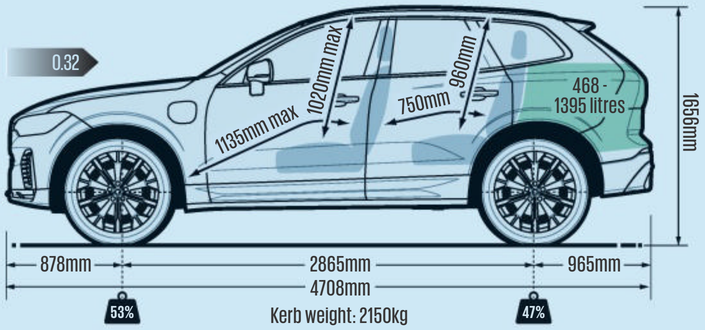
■ The only cloth seat option is this Navy Herringbone Weave, exclusive to Ultra trim. It's soft and breathable. Leather is available on higher trims. Lower ones get Nordico faux leather.

PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN BRADSHAW

TEST RESULTS

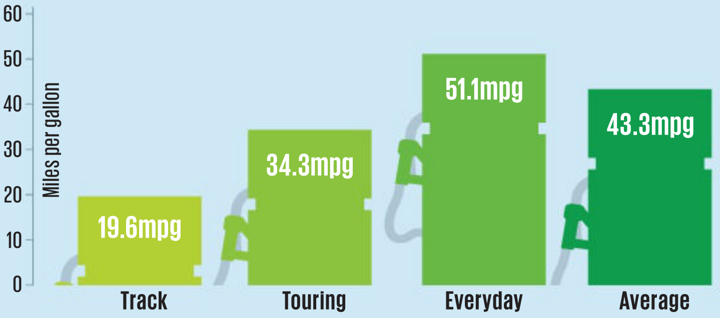
DIMENSIONS

Length 4708mm **Width** 2117mm/1902mm (with/without mirrors) **Height** 1656mm **Door span** 3740mm **Max height to open bootlid** 2130mm



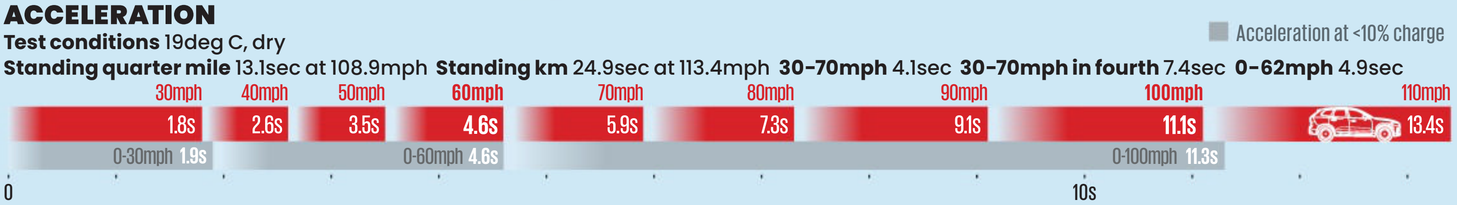
RUNNING EFFICIENCY

WLTP 282mpg (combined) **Test range** 676/536/798 miles (average/touring/everyday) **Electric test range** 40 miles



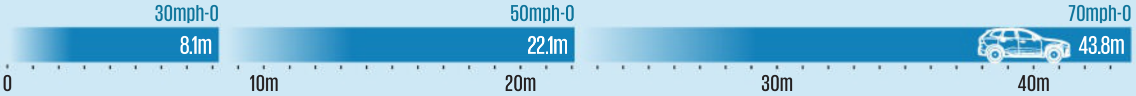
ACCELERATION

Test conditions 19deg C, dry
Standing quarter mile 13.1sec at 108.9mph **Standing km** 24.9sec at 113.4mph **30-70mph** 4.1sec **30-70mph in fourth** 7.4sec **0-62mph** 4.9sec

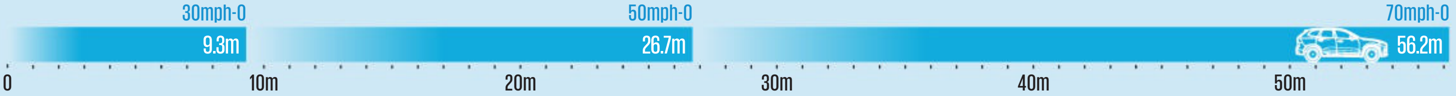


BRAKING

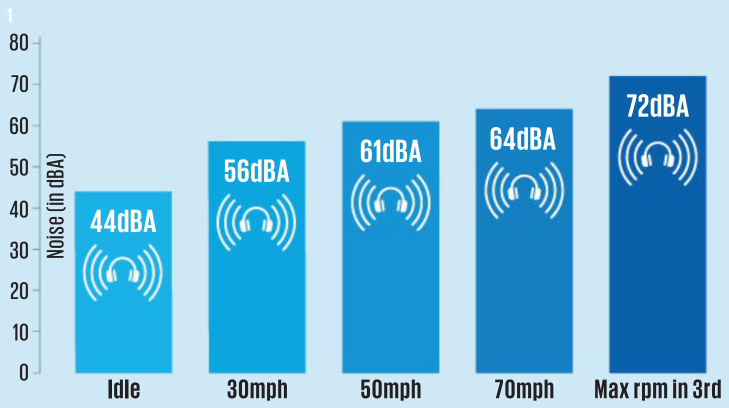
Dry 60-0mph 2.38sec



Wet 60-0mph 3.11sec



CABIN NOISE



MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFICATION

VOLVO XC60 T8 ULTRA

On-the-road price £68,860
Price as tested £69,555
Value after 3yrs/36k miles £44,430
Insurance group 42

HYBRID POWERTRAIN

Engine Front, transverse, 4WD
Type 4 cyls in line, 1969cc, turbo, petrol; 306bhp at 6000rpm, 295lb ft at 3000-4800rpm
Motor Permanent magnet synchronous motor; 143bhp, 228lb ft
Battery 18.8/14.9kWh (total/usable)
Total power 449bhp
Total torque 523lb ft
Power to weight 209bhp per tonne
Torque to weight 243lb ft per tonne

GEARBOX

Type 8-spd automatic
rpm in top gear at 70/80mph 1816/2076

CHASSIS & BODY

Construction Steel/aluminium unitary chassis **Weight/as tested** 2150kg/2145kg **Wheels** 8.0Jx20in **Tyres** 255/45 R20 105V, Michelin Primacy 4 VOL **Fuel tank** 71 litres

SUSPENSION & STEERING

Front Double wishbones, air springs, anti-roll bar **Rear** Multi-link, air springs, anti-roll bar **Steering** EPAS, rack and pinion; 3.0 turns lock to lock; 11.8m turning circle

"The XC60's dynamic ambitions are to feel easy and dependable"

PETER LIDDIARD

THE SMALL PRINT Power-to-weight and torque-to-weight figures are calculated using manufacturer's claimed kerb weight. Running efficiency is tested on a closed test track; 'touring' is representative of UK motorway driving, 'everyday' of intra-urban driving. Acceleration, braking and cabin noise are measured on reference surfaces, for cabin noise using a handheld decibel meter. Charging equipment may vary, but charger power always exceeds the advertised peak draw of the test car, unless stated. Second-row leg room is typical, measured behind a driver's seat set for 1000mm of leg room. © 2025, Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Test results may not be reproduced without editor's written permission.

PERFORMANCE

★★★★☆

PROS Outright performance; charge management; regenerative braking
CONS Noisy engine; EV performance

For all its obsession with safety, Volvo is remarkably liberal with its cars' power outputs. The T6 needs only 5.7sec to reach 62mph, which is already quicker than German rivals, but we are testing the T8, which knocks that down to just 4.9sec.

Our car had no trouble matching this claim at the proving ground, whether with the traction battery full or empty. In reality, the XC60 clearly maintains a decent buffer of energy even when the battery is at an indicated 0%. In EV mode, the XC60 took a leisurely 16.7sec to reach motorway speed (70mph), which shows where the next generation of PHEVs ought to improve.

More electric power in reserve would also make the XC60 more relaxing on the road. In everyday motoring, the engine is often busier and noisier than you would expect, even with plenty of charge in the battery. As a result, you don't get the indulgent feeling that a system output of 449bhp would suggest. This is exacerbated when the battery is depleted.

The touchscreen offers three options for managing the charge in the battery: Auto, Hold and Charge. Hold works as expected, but Charge did not seem to replenish the battery much. Auto is quite clever, because if you plug your destination into the Google navigation, it will use all of the electric power over the course of your journey but reserve some for sections in town or heavy traffic, rather than use it all at once.

We like how Volvo handles regenerative braking: D mode on the gear selector gives you freewheeling, while B engages a much stronger mode. On the touchscreen, you can toggle whether the car creeps forward from a stop when you lift off the brake pedal. Switching it off turns B mode into a full one-pedal setting.

RIDE & HANDLING

★★★☆☆

PROS Linear, predictable responses; quiet at a cruise
CONS Doesn't shine in either ride or handling; dated ADAS

Despite pushing deep into premium car territory over the past decade, Volvo has never managed to strike an especially competitive ride and handling compromise. That remains true, even if things have improved since our 2017 road test, where the XC60 scored a meagre two and a half stars in this section.

Like then, our test car rode on air suspension, which Ultra trim gets as standard. The ride over coarse surfaces manages to feel slightly hollow, while larger asymmetric inputs cause a rocking feeling. It's not so irksome that you won't get used to it – it's just curiously unresolved. The XC60 settles down nicely on the motorway and proved pleasantly quiet, recording a decibel less than the Audi Q5 TDI at 70mph.

The XC60 remains a car with no greater dynamic ambitions than to feel easy and dependable. To that end, it has fairly slow, light steering with a smooth feel and linear responses, but no feedback of any kind. In the case of the T8, with its 306bhp going to the front wheels only, that may be a deliberate choice to stave off torque steer. If it is, it certainly achieves that particular goal, but also makes the XC60 a fairly distant driving experience. Outright grip and turn-in response are actually quite good.

Volvo's assisted driving features now feel a generation behind. While the lane keep assist is unintrusive and the overspeed warning easily disabled, the cruise control feels fairly simplistic. The adaptive cruise control is quite slow to respond and easily spooked, and Pilot Assist dim-wittedly keeps the car exactly centred in the lane, seemingly unaware of its surroundings. Whereas Volvos used to offer the option to switch to standard cruise control or a speed limiter, that has been removed for 2025.

BUYING & OWNING

★★★☆☆

PROS Lower-spec versions are well priced; reasonably efficient on electric power
CONS Small battery and EV range; inefficient petrol engine

The XC60 starts from £48,410 for the mild-hybrid B5, or £55,360 for the PHEV T6, both in entry-level Pure trim. The T8 powertrain is coupled to Ultra trim, bumping the price to £68,860. That's rather expensive, so we would just stick with a T6, since the extra power isn't worth it. Spec for spec, the XC60 is priced in line with, and even a bit below, rivals.

Although a fully charged battery is supposedly good for 50 miles, we made it just 40 before the engine kicked in. That sort of range feels a bit last-generation, and leaves it vulnerable to tax changes that favour longer-range PHEVs.

The petrol engine itself isn't the most efficient either, so the XC60 does only a passable impression of a 'self-charging' hybrid on the depleted-battery touring and 'everyday' economy tests. An enormous 71-litre fuel tank means total range is very impressive. A

VERDICT

Volvo's crowd pleaser is still classy and spacious, though far from cutting edge

★★★⯪☆

Sometimes, continuing with an older model while rivals enter new generations can be an advantage as much as it is a handicap. True, the XC60 is falling behind with ADAS, the plug-in hybrid is far from state-of-the art and Volvo has also never really mastered chassis tuning. Next to a Mercedes GLC 300e on air suspension, it would feel slightly agricultural. Then again, it isn't as expensive. Meanwhile, the XC60 still looks as sharp as it did in 2017, and its high-quality, understated interior might just give it the edge over the Audi Q5 and BMW X3 for some buyers.

RIVALS

1

MERCEDES-BENZ GLC 300E
From £59,970
★★★★☆

2 **VOLVO XC60 T8**

AUDI Q5 E-HYBRID
From £58,340

BMW X3 30E
From £60,140

CHRISTMAS EARLY BIRD OFFER!

Save up to 20% extra!

Make their Christmas with a weekly dose of automotive joy

REVEALED DACIA'S MAD CITY C
FIRST FOR NEWS AND REVIEWS EVERY WEEK
AUTOCAR
NEW 3 SERI
The next era for the car that can do every
BRIT EV RATED
+CAN IT BEAT SKODA, KIA?
TESLA'S RAPID MODEL Y
DRIVEN: ALL-NEW JEEP
THE TRUTH ABOUT USED CAR WARRANTIES

Take advantage of our Christmas Early Bird offer and buy a gift subscription from just £30.99 for 13 issues, saving £33 on the shop price.

Crafted exclusively for those who live and breathe cars, Autocar is the present that will rev up their festive season.

TIME-LIMITED EARLY BIRD OFFER ENDS **1 DECEMBER**

Order today

Call 0344 848 8807 quoting X25EBPA

Visit www.themagazineshop.com/X25EBPA/aca

SCAN ME TO ORDER

CLASSIC & SPORTS CAR
FERRARI'S FINEST
WHAT CAR?
BRITAIN'S MOST AND LEAST RELIABLE CARS

See great offers on our other titles at themagazineshop.com

TERMS AND CONDITIONS This is a UK-only offer; for overseas offers, please visit themagazineshop.com/X25EBPA/aca or call +44 (0) 1604 251 461. All savings are based on the UK cover price of £4.99 and is correct as of October 2025. Please allow up to 35 days for delivery of your first issue. Direct Debit rates are valid for one year, after which they are subject to change; should prices change, we will inform you in writing. Should you wish to cancel your subscription, it will be cancelled on expiry of the current term, which will not be refundable, other than in exceptional circumstances. Details of the Direct Debit Guarantee are available upon request. **Offer ends 1 December 2025.**

ILLYA VERPRAET

Testing, testing

A new and fairer way of testing PHEVs' efficiency is a good thing, right?

Both of our road test subjects this week are plug-in hybrids. According to the official WLTP figures, one does 256.8mpg, the other 282.0mpg. A Volkswagen Passat eHybrid even boasts 731mpg.

There is some sense to these numbers. The way they come about involves something called a 'utility factor', which represents the proportion of total miles that a PHEV is likely to drive in electric mode – when it uses no fuel at all.

The actual numbers are furiously complicated, but in effect it boils down to this: if a PHEV with an electric range of 48 miles starts a 50-mile journey fully charged, then it will indeed use a minute amount of fuel. These figures are achievable if you religiously plug the car in and rarely do journeys that exceed the electric range.

But without any context, a reasonable person would look at them and rightfully conclude they are nonsense. Even with plenty of context, it's clear that most PHEVs do in fact travel significant distances using their combustion engines, and while they can be very fuel efficient when used as designed, they're not *that* fuel efficient in the real world. And that's before we consider the cost of the electricity used to charge them, never mind how convenient it might be to plug them in.

PHEVs only work as intended if charged up all of the time

"The fleet market did not like this upheaval one bit"

The trouble is that these overly optimistic fuel consumption figures are used as the basis for big tax breaks and general reckonings about how 'green' an overall car fleet is.

It makes sense, then, that there would be an adjustment, and said adjustment comes in the form of the boringly titled Euro 6e-bis emissions standard. The machine behind the WLTP cycle has tweaked the utility factor to account for more engine-on running, and while they were at it, they called into being a separate fuel economy figure for driving on a depleted battery.

According to the new test cycle, the Volvo XC60 T8 we've road tested is rated for 91.1mpg combined and 39.2mpg on a flat battery – and that latter figure is pretty much bang in the middle between our touring and 'everyday' figures. If you covered about half your mileage on electric power and didn't visit any test tracks (as we do as part of the road test), 91.1mpg should be achievable as well.

Then we come to CO_2 output, which is correlated with the fuel consumption. As a result of the changes, our Volvo's output goes up from 23g/km to 70g/km. According to the UK's benefit-in-kind rules, that would mean it is no longer eligible for a particularly low company car tax rate, because cars have to emit less than 50g/km to qualify for the really low rates: the XC60 T8 would go from 9% to 20% as result. That's still lower than a mild-hybrid XC60, mind.

It all sounds pretty sensible, doesn't it? So the initial news was that from next year, by which time all cars need to have been rehomologated, most plug-in hybrids wouldn't be quite so attractive as company cars as they used to be. That seems fair, because they are not as environmentally friendly as originally presumed. In other words, common sense has prevailed, better late than never, so pour one out for the suits behind desks.

But not so fast. The fleet market did not like this upheaval one bit, and nor did the car industry, because low CO_2 figures help them to meet the ZEV mandate. So after enough complaining, the UK government rowed back and announced an 'easement'. Basically, we stick with the old figure for a few years.

This strikes me as madness. If the purpose is to be green, then why are we ignoring a more accurate and fairer estimate of a car's emissions? (Let's not get onto battery manufacturing and recycling, lest we be here all day.)

The reason is that many people can't charge a car at home and would be screwed over if forced into an EV. Real problem, bad solution. For them, a PHEV is not the answer, because, as the new depleted-battery figure shows, they tend to be not very economical if you don't plug them in all the time. Both the environment and drivers who can't charge a car cheaply or conveniently would be much better off with a fuel-efficient petrol or 'self-charging' hybrid car. I've even heard of this other fuel that doesn't need spark plugs. It makes engines a bit rattly but has the potential for amazing fuel economy. Name starts with a 'd'…

Instead of the government shooting the messenger by turning its back on the more accurate emissions cycle, it should overhaul the tax system and EV mandate that promotes cars that are both less convenient and less environmentally friendly. Cars that use little fuel without any help from the electricity grid deserve more recognition.

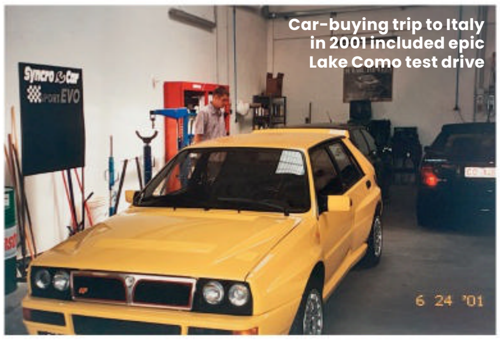
On opening my garage for a recent visitor, he reacted with a frenzied wonder that suggested the electric door had risen to reveal a live tiger. What lay within was merely 10 cubic metres of metals, plastics, paints, fabrics and leather. But those materials were cast, stamped, welded, moulded, sprayed, crimped and stitched into the form of a Lancia Delta HF Integrale Evo, and the sum of those parts meant more to him than an object logically should. And his delight is matched by my despair at having to let it go.

I had lusted after an Integrale since its world-beating Group A rallying zenith that bridged the 1980s and 1990s, and the upgraded Evo version's bullish form, intensive engineering and knack for devouring blacktop put it firmly atop my wish list. I'd set my sights on an Evo 1, the final Integrale to be homologated for racing by the FIA. The £25,000 they cost new in 1992 had shrunk to barely five figures on the Italian market by the turn of the millennium, which led me to an unfeasibly glamorous test drive along the shores of Lake Como in a radiant Giallo Ferrari edition example in June 2001. Within a couple of months, I met it at Dover and drove it home to Edinburgh, where it became my daily.

And what a treat that is when your commute runs through the motorway-free, lightly trafficked haven of the Scottish Borders, rarely more than spitting distance from an RAC Rally special stage of yesteryear (see p47). Six years later, I scribbled about it for an Autocar writing competition for budding journalists. The then editor's response remains lost in the post, but in 2009 I travelled south to pester the magazine into giving me work experience and, eventually, actual work – marooning the Integrale north of the border for several years.

Since that time the Lancia has covered barely 9000 miles. I'm back in Scotland now, but the car largely remains an exhibit because I now have two young kids, and because a function of the Delta's rarity and provenance means it's now worth proper money. In 2017, a mint, 4000-mile Giallo Ferrari sold in New York for £142,000, and a British 17,000-miler made £105,000 in 2022. My car is tidy enough but leggier at 87,000 miles, so it has been estimated at five grand either side of £60,000: a welcome windfall for a growing family – unlike the cost of continued maintenance for a car I now barely drive.

One of the regular comments people make about the car is 'don't ever sell it'. I've always replied by saying I won't unless I have to. Well, that time has come. And I'm not finding it easy. I've literally lost sleep over selling other cars and motorbikes, but this is a particular torment. I know it's not logical and, to some, will seem more than a bit silly. Of course, I'm fortunate to have owned a special car such as this and that the Delta has become valuable. But countering a matter of the heart with a matter of the head ▸



Car-buying trip to Italy in 2001 included epic Lake Como test drive

Ciao, belter

As he prepares to part with his beloved Lancia Delta Integrale Evo after 24 years of ownership, **RICHARD WEBBER** asks why we become so emotionally attached to our cars – and how to say goodbye

PHOTOGRAPHY MAX EDLESTON

A final forlorn fettle – and maybe a tear shed. But now it's time to move on

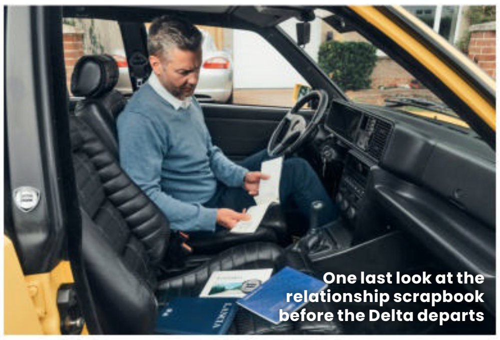
◂ is like squaring a circle. To try to make sense of why the likes of you and I feel so strongly about our cars, and maybe to help negotiate the emotional trauma of disposing of mine, I've called upon psychologist Dr Christian Jarrett, editor of digital magazine Psyche.

In clinical terms, I'm grappling with 'object attachment', and some of Jarrett's writing on the subject (for The Psychologist magazine) strikes a chord. Possessions can become so entwined with our personality as to become extensions of the self. This could be down to wiring – in our medial prefrontal cortex, if you're interested. Jarrett cites a study by fellow psychologist Kyungmi Kim that concluded: "Areas of the brain that are known to be involved in thinking about the self also appear to be involved when we create associations between external things and ourselves through ownership."

It begins at an early age: studies show children as young as six apportion extra significance to objects merely by dint of it being 'theirs'. Even babies fly into a rage when dispossessed of a favourite toy. "It's as if the children believed their special object had a unique essence, a form of magical thinking that reappears in adulthood in our treatment of heirlooms, celebrity memorabilia and artwork," wrote Jarrett.

I ask him: how can we become so attached to our cars? "Psychologists have long recognised that our relationship to belongings is emotional, rather than rational and logical," he says. "The value we place in something increases as soon as we call it our own – known as the 'endowment effect'. It is as if our things become infused with our identity, and it's very easy for us to become sentimental about them.

"There is plenty of scope for cars to become deeply entwined with many of our important autobiographical memories – such as cherished holidays or as markers of particular chapters in our lives. This might contribute to them feeling more like a fellow traveller. A car's smells and sounds could enrich these associations further and help give different cars their own unique character. First cars, in particular, might be bound up with the transition to adulthood. And with so many varied brands, and the long cultural histories of many models, there is also great opportunity to use one's car as a way to signal a sense of belonging and identity."



One last look at the relationship scrapbook before the Delta departs

A warning light-free dashboard is always a good sign

WRC dominance cemented the Delta Integrale's legacy

LANCIA
MOTOR C

And what would be a psychologist's counter-argument to those who say 'it's just a car'? Jarrett says: "Of course, it is possible to downplay the value of any physical object, as compared with the sanctity of living things. However, objects often acquire a meaning to us far beyond their physical function. People who lose their homes in natural disasters or suffer the loss of a cherished heirloom in a robbery often describe experiencing a kind of grief, as if they have lost part of themselves. This emotional attachment could easily apply to a car, and to derogate it as a mere physical thing is to underestimate the deep connections we can form to our personal belongings." (I look forward to repeating this verbatim to my car-agnostic other half.)

Finally, I ask for tips to help mentally process selling the car. "Borrow ideas from how people manage and express their grief for loved ones," he suggests. "You could make an effort to cherish your memories of the car, such as by creating a photo album of places you've been in it, writing a story about your experiences in it or taking it for one last treasured journey."

It is, therefore, strictly on doctor's orders that I liberate the Delta from its protective Carcoon bubble for one final summer's evening raid.

I feel a Pavlovian response to holding the slim, fobless keys in my hand, the chunky thunk of the central locking, tapping the transponder on the aftermarket immobiliser (Thatcham-approved, ▸

GETTY IMAGES

BECOMING A GREAT IN '88

Of the Lancia Delta's six consecutive World Rally Championship manufacturers' titles, from 1987 to 1992, it was the 1988 season, when the HF 4WD was replaced by the more sophisticated Integrale, that generated the motorsport folklore that tempted me to want and, ultimately, buy one.

Miki Biasion was already drivers' champion by November's finale at a particularly gruelling RAC Rally, but Martini Lancia team-mate Markku Alén stepped up in his absence. The event's six Scottish stages, which took place on day four, were heavily snow-bound and centred around a regrouping point in my home town of Hawick, where fellow Lancia-driving Finn Pentti Airikkala compared the conditions to famously treacherous Monte Carlo.

The routes were so perilous that on the fifth stage Alén oversteered on ice and slid backwards down a wooded bank before somehow being excavated by a rabble of ever-enthusiastic spectators. The incident cost him 5min 31sec to the leaders, but he went on to win nine of the remaining 16 stages and claim a stunning overall victory by more than four minutes.

The Integrale took Markku Alén to RAC Rally victory in 1988

"To derogate a car as a mere thing is to underestimate the deep connections we form to our personal belongings"

◂ naturally), the resistance of the ignition barrel and the resulting start-up that brings an expectant whirr from the engine above the exhaust's bass note. All eight diagnostic panel LEDs extinguish (always a nervy moment for Integrale owners), and we're off.

It's not far from my Edinburgh home to a particular favourite B-road: smooth and twisty, it climbs and falls over wild hills, with arrow-like straights through the valleys. There is no traffic and, importantly, I have no passengers: this is a private communion on medical advice, a consolidation of personal memories.

Peering over the bulging, tabletop bonnet, I'm gently slotting the rubbery gearstick between second, third and fourth and keeping the 210bhp, 220lb ft inline four on a simmer, but there's still lots of lag until the Garrett T3 turbocharger gathers its faculties and stuffs a bar of pressure into the engine. It responds in a frenzy of acceleration: with just 1300kg to move, the 33-year-old Evo still shifts.

It's in combining that shove with the sublimely intuitive and progressive steering, the lavish suspension travel and the unwavering grip offered by the mechanical four-wheel drive system that adds up to the Integrale's distinctive dynamic character. The contact patches are tacked down as it swallows back-road undulations and mid-corner lumps whole, with neither the skittishness nor the bucking of many modern counterparts. And then there are the looks: brilliantly brawny, epically quadrate. All of which brings me an intense and immediate happiness like few things in life can. Ultimately, it is the impending cessation of this that is leaving me down in the mouth.

The stories those seat covers could tell, now off to make new memories

Driving the Delta is an immersive experience few new cars can replicate

Yes, I have lots of magnificent and vivid recollections associated with this car. But for most of them, the car wasn't incidental to the memory – it *was* the memory. How it felt on that sun-kissed recce by Lake Como; the day-long charge home from Dover; or the thrash across The String on the Isle of Arran. Even the countless, rain-sodden countryside commutes of those early days are immutable memories.

Indeed, while people might associate a treasured thing with a particular experience – say, a nicknack from a favourite holiday, a photo of a family gathering, or a wedding ring – for the likes of us with an automotive affliction, a car can be both the thing *and* the experience.

But not every car. I hold a great deal of affection for our crusty family hack, a 2009 Volkswagen Tiguan. But at the risk of making things weird, that's a platonic relationship. I could (but won't) harry it around the Green Hell to the best of my ability without risk of it marking

"As with all of life's rose-tinted recollections, I will remember the thrills more than the bills"

Ice Cream
Ice Cream
Ice Cream

my soul. It makes my life easier but not richer.

Unlike the Delta. And that is in spite of its numerous flaws: the symphony of scuttle shake, the heaving body roll and the suspension's wincing sensitivity to sharp edges. Not to mention the occasionally eye-watering cost of maintenance and preservation. Yet, as with all of life's rose-tinted recollections, I will remember the thrills more than the bills.

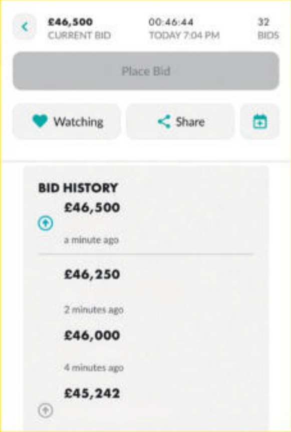
When it comes to parting ways, I resolve to begin that mental ordeal when the auction listing goes live (see box, right). It becomes more real when the new owner sends the proceeds and absolute when I catch a final glimpse of the brilliant, 225-code Giallo Ferrari paintwork as the flatbed leaves my street.

That's it, then: the old heave-ho for the old Evo. But the expected weapons-grade moping hasn't materialised. Like a first day at school, the reality has been less distressing than the anticipation. I've concluded – with frankly unprecedented rationality – that since I was too busy to drive the car, I'm also too busy to miss it. Which has offered some sort of relief. I'd kill for another Delta one day but, in the meantime, I'll take my fix where I can get it. Even if that means an everyday bimble in the Tiguan. As the song goes, if you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with. ◼

HAMMER TIME

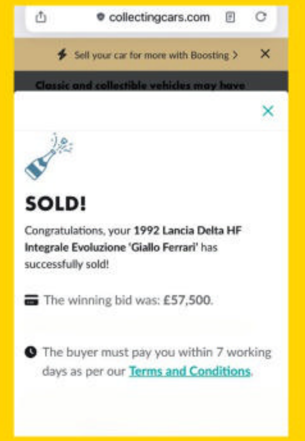
I sold the Lancia via Collecting Cars, the impressively slick online auctioneer that has found new homes for myriad modern classics, including tens of Evos. Its week-long auctions end with the seller keeping the full hammer price, with (quite logically) only the buyer paying fees, which come to 7.2% with a £7200 cap. My outlays were a valet and £175 for detailed professional photography.

I gathered the Delta's paperwork as if preparing for probate and set the reserve at £50,000. After five days, bidding had reached a healthy £44,500, with 600 watchers, so I was convinced to pull the reserve to encourage a crescendo. There followed 48 hours of stagnation, anxiety dreams and stomach cramps before a final flurry of new bids – each of which felt like being indiscriminately defibrillated. It ended at £57,500 – a fair price in my eyes – on a Friday night, and the Delta was paid for and, finally, gone by Wednesday morning.



£46,500 CURRENT BID
00:46:44 TODAY 7:04 PM
32 BIDS

BID HISTORY
£46,500
a minute ago
£46,250
2 minutes ago
£46,000
4 minutes ago
£45,242


collectingcars.com
Sell your car for more with Boosting >
Classic and collectible vehicles may have

SOLD!

Congratulations, your **1992 Lancia Delta HF Integrale Evoluzione 'Giallo Ferrari'** has successfully sold!

The winning bid was: £57,500.

The buyer must pay you within 7 working days as per our Terms and Conditions.

The final process of emancipation was swift and painless

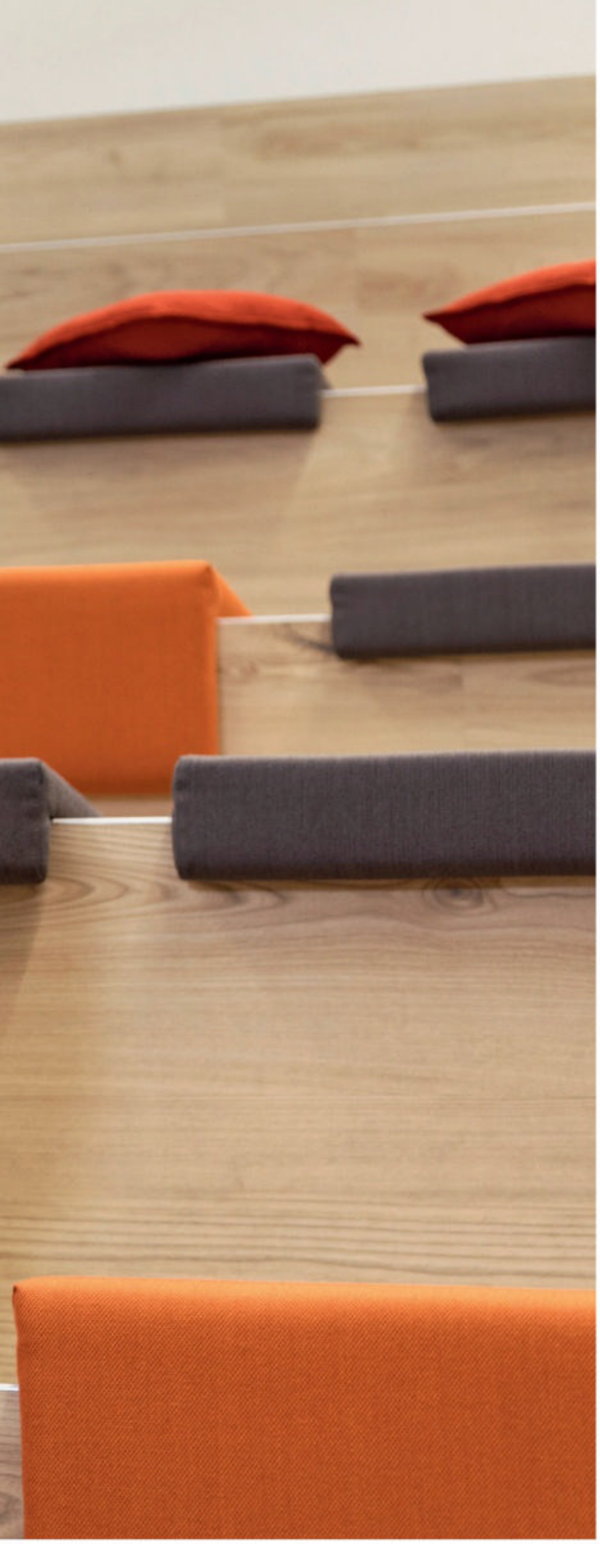
It's not you, it's me: break-up drive on local B-road tears the heartstrings

Intimate care: Webber attends to the Delta's surplus of interior fuzz

Professional valet was a small price to pay as a parting token of affection

Are you sitting comfortably?

Volkswagen technical development chief Kai Grünitz says our backsides are a crucial development tool. JAMES ATTWOOD finds out more



It's the most serious challenge long-established European car makers have faced in decades: a seemingly endless number of ambitious Chinese firms flooding the market with increasingly sophisticated cars. But Volkswagen's technical chief has a secret weapon that he says is key to beating China's advanced hardware and software technology: the popometer.

"It's what you feel with your behind," explains Kai Grünitz, when he catches me looking somewhat bemused. Yes, we're talking bottoms here, and specifically the ability to detect what a car is doing through one. It's that whole 'seat of your pants' thing. And the most advanced software engineers in the world have yet to learn how to program a butt.

"Ultimately, making cars is all about people," adds Grünitz. "You have to sit in the seat and feel the vehicle, and you can't do that with a simulation, no matter how advanced it is."

Don't mistake Grünitz's belief in the power of the popometer for a luddite rejection of modern technology, though: as Volkswagen's technical development boss since 2022, the German is the brains behind the manufacturer's next wave of electric vehicles, led by the forthcoming ID Polo and ID Cross. Beyond that, he is working on vehicles that will benefit from an advanced new software architecture from the Volkswagen Group's tie-up with US EV start-up Rivian.

He is also taking on the Chinese at their own game, spearheading efforts to accelerate Volkswagen's development time: the ID Polo and ID Cross were developed in around 36 months. He insists 'China speed' can be achieved without compromising on the fundamentals.

"That's what will differentiate the good brands from the better brands," says Grünitz, adding that knowledge of these fundamentals – shaped by not only the popometer but also decades of chassis engineering experience – gives Volkswagen an edge over faster Chinese rivals.

Learning how to develop chassis needs "experience, knowledge and time", he says. "You can't think about developing the car in 24 months and then just having two weeks to work on the application [of on-road performance]. That's not enough, and you have to really know what to do. That's really something European car manufacturers and OEMs – not only Volkswagen but also the likes of BMW or Audi or whoever – have as an advantage. We have been doing this for quite a long time.

"I'm not afraid of the Chinese. Why should the Chinese know what a European customer wants better than a European OEM? Why should they know better how you drive in Great Britain?"

Grünitz has spent close to 30 years at the Volkswagen Group, with stints at Skoda and a long spell at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, where he worked on autonomous driving before becoming overall technical chief. His move to the car brand was part of the management overhaul introduced by boss Thomas Schäfer that included Andreas Mindt's arrival as design chief.

Grünitz doesn't have the same profile as the CEO and head of design, but his role in reviving Volkswagen is just as significant: to make cars that drive like Volkswagens. He reflects back on his arrival at Volkswagen and a three-year process that is close to reaching fruition with the ID Polo that sits on the group's crucial new MEB Entry platform: a stripped-back version of its bespoke electric architecture designed to allow for models priced at around £22,000.

The new T-Roc will be one of the final VWs to feature the controversial slider infotainment controls. "I don't mind the slider, as long as it's illuminated," says Grünitz, "but I can see why customers prefer knobs."

"We started just before Christmas 2022, with the first sketches and ideas of what a Volkswagen should look like, and since then we've been evolving that," recalls Grünitz. "This was the first time that I had the possibility to start from the very first sketches until the presentation of a finished vehicle, over a three-year period. Usually as a technician you start something and end up elsewhere. With this car I've been involved from design to production."

That extended involvement has given Grünitz the opportunity to "really leave my fingerprint" on the project , but there is a caveat, he adds: "What's important is that this is not a car made for me. That's often what we've done in the past, a car made for [former chiefs Ferdinand] Piëch or [Martin] Winterkorn. But this is a car made for our customers: it's not about being perfect for me from a design or technology perspective.

"When developing this car we really asked our customers a lot about what they wanted from this sort of vehicle, and we did a lot of studies and focus groups. This is not a vehicle for board members, but a vehicle for customers."

The astonishing admission that Volkswagen (the literal people's car) has in the past focused more on what board members design than what customers want is striking – if not entirely a surprise, given some of Piëch's eye-wateringly expensive vanity projects, such as the W16 engine. But recognising these past failures, echoing many of Schäfer's acknowledgements of how Volkswagen lost its way, is an encouraging sign that Grünitz knows what to put right.

Interestingly, what is now the ID Polo began life as a concept focused purely on reviving ▸

ID Cross, developed under Grünitz, will spearhead VW's new wave of EVs

◂ VW's design language, and Mindt has admitted it has required a touch of design retconning to add subtle nods to its ICE sibling. When it came to dynamics, Grünitz says: "We didn't focus that much on creating a Polo; we focused on bringing back a real Volkswagen. That was the focus from every perspective: design, material, price point, functions. That guided us through the development process."

The ID Polo will also become the first electric model offered with a GTI version. Previous ID models have been natively rear-driven and with high-powered all-wheel-drive GTX range-toppers, but both the ID Polo and GTI will be powered from the front. Grünitz is clearly excited by the prospect of developing a new GTI, but that's not a surprise given he has spent a good chunk of his time over the past few years trying to source a Golf GTI from the year of his birth.

"It's fun working on a GTI, because you know what you want to create," he says. "That's why I'm happy about the front-wheel drive, because a GTI always has been front-wheel driven. Why should I go to a rear-driven vehicle? Sure, with front-wheel drive you're limited with the power to prevent wheelspin, but that's always been the case with a GTI. You can drive a Golf R with four-wheel drive, and have power and better acceleration. But it feels different. Having a GTI is more like having an Adidas sneaker."

Notably, the Polo GTI won't receive a massive power hike, offering a relatively modest 223bhp and eschewing the trend of many performance EVs. "It's a sporty car, and a sporty car is about much more than just having acceleration," says Grünitz. "It's also about this feeling that you really have with a GTI. A GTI has to be agile and have go-kart feeling and a low centre of gravity.

"From the drivetrain perspective, there's not a huge difference regarding the power [between the standard ID Polo and the GTI version], but you will have a torque splitter on the front axle, dedicated applications for the drivetrain and chassis, and a dedicated GTI mode with additional boost that you can enter by pressing a GTI button on the steering wheel. You will love it."

A huge problem Volkswagen has faced with the transition to electric is the corresponding transition to 'software-defined vehicles'. It was a significant issue with the first ID models that ran on systems developed by Cariad, the Volkswagen Group's in-house software brand.

"We had quite a lot of software challenges, I would say," laughs Grünitz with considerable understatement. "It took us two or three years to come to a level of stability, which I would say sets the benchmark in the environment of our competitors. We took a close look at our processes and looked at how we can improve."

Part of that includes the group's various brands working more closely together, evidenced by the partnership with Skoda and Cupra on the MEB Entry project. That hasn't just been about the big-picture software issues but also far smaller things such as the number of warning alerts you get when you're driving. "That disturbs the

ID.POLO
ID.PO

"It's fun working on a GTI, because you know what you want to create"

ID Polo is also being developed as a GTI, eschewing VW's GTX badge approach to hot EVs

Grünitz and Mindt at the launch of the ID 2all concept, precursor to the ID Polo

Grünitz (right) explains how VW will counter the influx of Chinese EVs

Grünitz is inspired by extending the GTI legacy into the EV era

POLO GTI
GTI

customers in many directions," admits Grünitz, "and we don't want that."

Key to the Volkswagen Group's future software development is its joint venture with Rivian to develop a new software architecture that will underpin most of its future models, starting with the production version of the ID Every1 in 2027.

"Rivian is a small company with just one project in one region, coming together with a group of 10 different brands from all over the world," says Grünitz. "Combining both strengths is quite interesting – and challenging at the same time. Their software is not perfect, but it's a really good starting point. What makes it special is the capability for over-the-air updates."

Grünitz notes that even the first test cars can be updated over the air, which he says makes a "huge" difference. He adds: "It's really another way of working." In the end, it's another example of how the art of developing new cars is transforming in a new age of electric vehicles built around advanced software platforms. But cars remain moving mechanical wonders, and an understanding of that will always be key to their development. It's encouraging to know, then, that someone such as Grünitz is leading the way for Volkswagen, bringing plenty of passion – and that popometer. ■

WOB TR 252
WOB TR 250

T-Roc continues in ICE/ hybrid forms in response to customer demands

ICE OR EV? A FOOT IN BOTH CAMPS

There is plenty of focus on EVs, but Kai Grünitz is still heavily involved in developing combustion-powered machines. In fact, our interview actually takes place on a driving tour of Bavarian roads in a late prototype T-Roc piloted by Grünitz.

Like many car firms, Volkswagen has slowed down on its plan to phase out ICE vehicle sales, and Grünitz says a lot of customers "want to stay" with petrol or diesel power. That means his development team is having to work on multiple powertrains, but he insists: "They're not that different to work on, to be honest." It's more about your starting point.

He adds: "It's easier starting from an existing vehicle, because you know what your customer wants – you can ask them. What do you need? What do you want to improve? With the T-Roc, customers asked us for more space in the rear, which is why we increased the length by 35mm.

"With the ID Polo we have customers who know what a combustion Polo is like, but how do you transfer that into the electric world, with all the opportunities that offers? That's a little more challenging, but it's the fun part of the game. I'm an engineer, I want to do something new – but I like both challenges."

countach
LPI 800-4
SIÁN
FKP 37
CENTENARIO
6°
ELEMENTO

WHAT A LOAD OF BULL

Lamborghini Day is a hands-on celebration of the marque. Owners are invited – and so was **CHARLIE MARTIN**

You join me undercover in the crowd at Lamborghini Day UK, an exclusive event for owners of the marque's cars hosted at Millbrook Proving Ground. The key attractions are the presentation of the Fenomeno, the brand's new 'few-off' hypercar, and opportunities to test drive the Temerario on a closed test track.

Were that not enough, there's also Lamborghini coffee, Lamborghini racing simulators, Lamborghini pizzas and even a scent diffuser on each table emblazoned with a raging – but sweet-smelling – bull.

It's a chance for attendees to fully immerse themselves in the brand. Many wear gilets or hoodies with some kind of reference to the marque, and all arrive in the car park with a flurry of revs.

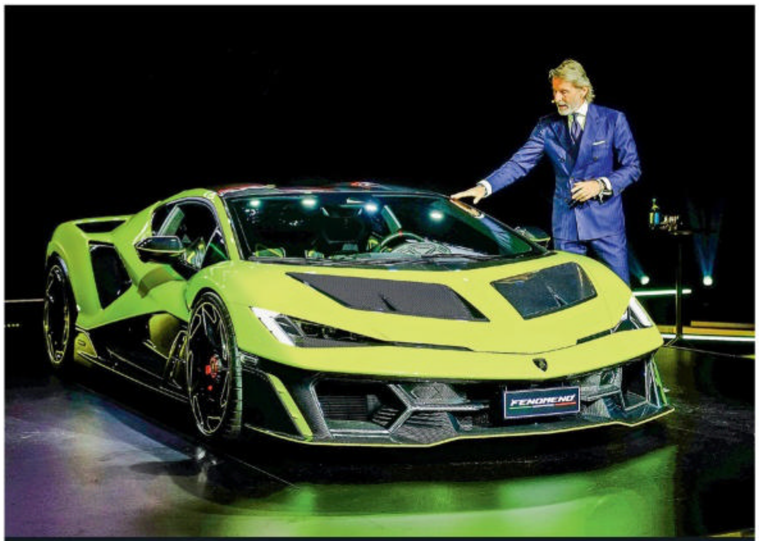
For Lamborghini, it's a welcome opportunity to update its most loyal customers on what they might be buying next. That could be anything from a Revuelto with the entire personalisation catalogue thrown at it to a carbonfibre racket for playing padel – for the uninitiated, a curious cross between tennis and squash that's popular among the young, well-to-do types that Lamborghini rather wants to buy its cars.

"We decided that at least once a year, in each region, we needed to bring into one place everything Lamborghini," Federico Foschini, the brand's sales and marketing supremo, tells me. "The product is something you can easily find at the dealership – but here we are also doing heritage activities with [in-house restoration arm] Polo Storico; we are doing a personalisation programme; and we have a few products we would not always display in a dealership. This event is our one-to-one brand ambassador."

To that end, Lamborghini Day attracts some of the brand's finest cars. Here are our highlights…

THE LEGENDS KEEP SPINNING

Even the DJ's turntables had a Lamborghini flavour; carbonfibre padel racket; owners get an enhanced experience not available in Lamborghini dealers; the coffee is on-brand, too



FENOMENO

The main event, and justifiably so. With 1065bhp, this is Lamborghini's fastest car yet. Just 30 will be built – 29 for the brand's most loyal customers and one for its own collection. Each costs £3 million, and all were sold ahead of the car's public unveiling, so this could be as close as we'll ever come to it.

SIAN

Lamborghini's first crack at a hybrid was a curious one: the Sián foregoes a conventional battery for a supercapacitor to add 33bhp to its 6.5-litre V12, for a total of 774bhp. Its design represented a dramatic leap, too, although it didn't preview the Revuelto all that closely.

HURACAN STERRATO

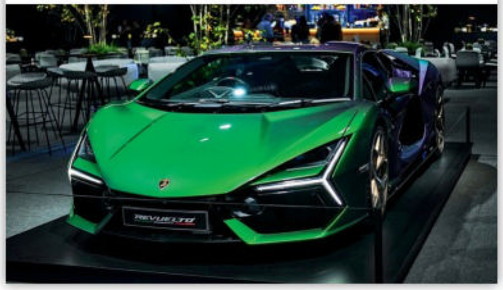
The first Lamborghini to win our annual Britain's Best Driver's Car contest was quite unlike any of its forebears: the Huracán Sterrato had huge suspension travel and all-terrain tyres to turn it into an unexpectedly brilliant drive on the open road. It proved so successful that the brand is now considering something similar for one of its new models – but, hinted Foschini, "even crazier".

AVENTADOR

This was the only car in the parking area to wear a set of silver wheels rather than black. Owner Thomas tells me its new exhaust – an original Lambo part – was actually cheaper than an aftermarket replacement: it's so common for owners to bin standard pipes in favour of something louder that there's a surplus of authentic items.

REVUELTO

Lamborghini is going big on the diversity of specifications it now offers to owners, and this is exemplified by this car's chameleon paint – perhaps more reminiscent of something from Blackpool than Sant'Agata. Owners are seemingly on board with it, though: another Revuelto parked outside is finished in a lovely purple shade that evokes the Diablo SE30 Jota.



COUNTACH

"Countach is a Piedmontese exclamation of astonishment, wonder and amazement," reads our 1974 report on the supercar. Half a century on, the Countach still lives up to its name: this example, presented by Polo Storico, was crowded all day long. It's remarkable just how small and graceful it looks next to the brutish Revuelto.

CENTENARIO

CENTENARIO

Lamborghini's 100th birthday present to itself was this dramatic reworking of the Aventador, with its rakish body finished in bare carbonfibre and engine boosted by 19bhp, to 759bhp. The brand claimed so much air could flow through its body that it was in effect "permeable".

SESTO ELEMENTO

The 'Sixth Element' name referred to this radical Gallardo-based supercar's carbonfibre construction, six being the atomic number of carbon. Although originally devised for track use only, this car's window stickers from the Goodwood Festival of Speed reveal it is one of two recently made road-legal by Lanzante.

GALLARDO

This example of Lamborghini's junior supercar was the oldest machine we spied in the owners' car park, and in this relatively restrained spec it was also one of the least conspicuous. Gallardos are among the most affordable routes into owning a Lambo, with facelift cars like this starting at around £70k.

■ HOW TO BUY A USED LAMBO, P60

LIVING WITH A...

Where our long-term test cars have been and what they've done

"It's comfortable in town and on country roads, and quite fun to drive"

FIRST REPORT

BYD DOLPHIN SURF

Can this electric supermini impress beyond its low price? Let's find out

WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT To see if BYD's value-focused newcomer can dislodge the European small car elite

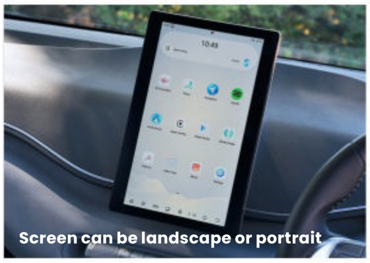
Since the brand arrived in the UK in 2023 with the Atto 3, BYD has enjoyed exponential growth. It sold more cars here in the first quarter of 2025 than in the whole of last year. In September it sold 11,271 cars in the UK, which was more than Renault and essentially matching Peugeot and Skoda – and made this the company's largest market outside China.

BYD has named many of its cars after marine life, including the Seal saloon and the Seal 6 estate, plus the Seal U and Sealion 7 SUVs. It is in fact an impressively varied line-up, and BYD is banking on the success of the latest addition to our fleet: the electric Dolphin Surf supermini.

Already one of the brand's biggest sellers in China, the Dolphin Surf is also among the country's most popular EVs, although elsewhere in the world it's known as the Seagull (the name was changed because us Brits aren't the biggest fans of those chip-stealing rats with wings).

Naming aside, that popularity is largely down to some attractive pricing. Even though the Dolphin Surf doesn't qualify for the UK government's Electric Car Grant, it's still one of the country's cheapest EVs. Prices start at an enticing £18,650, which gets you a claimed 137 miles of range from a small, 30kWh battery and 87bhp from a front-mounted electric motor.

Our car, in mid-range Boost trim, is priced from £21,950 and comes with a 43.2kWh battery that's good for a more useful 200-mile range, and it's mated to a 154bhp motor, so there's some more firepower too. BYD says it will hit 62mph from rest in 9.1sec, which feels like a sweet spot for small electric cars. That certainly makes it nippy in town and capable enough for motorway use. Our car can charge at speeds of up to 85kW, which is some way behind many of its key rivals.



Screen can be landscape or portrait

Inside, the Dolphin Surf has all the hallmarks of the BYD model range. One of those is the cabin's unbelievably strong smell of plastic, but once you've become accustomed to it, you begin to appreciate a bright, airy and roomy interior.

There's a lot of head room in both rows despite the supermini billing and, significantly, it beats the boxier Citroën ë-C3 for leg room. Electric seats are standard, so there's lots of scope for adjustment, and the Dolphin Surf generally makes good use of its narrow, tall silhouette – although boot space is limited, at a modest 308 litres.

Perceived quality is good for the Dolphin Surf's price point, too, with some soft materials and solid-feeling plastics, thankfully not of the glossy, fingerprint-stained kind you see in many cars. There's a handy small digital driver's display ahead of the steering wheel and some smart-looking buttons and switches to control the vital functions. The cabin doesn't scream cheap by any means, and in fact it puts some rivals to shame in terms of how it looks and feels inside.

SECOND OPINION

The Dolphin Surf impressed me on a 250-mile motorway trip, with an adequate ride and an interior that feels way above its class and price point. Despite the hilariously intrusive ADAS, this economical little car is rather pleasing to drive – and it doesn't look bad either. **SA**

Then there's the infotainment system, which is feature-packed if not a little gimmick-heavy. Not only can the 10.1in display rotate between landscape and portrait orientations, but it also has integrated Spotify

It's usefully nippy in town thanks to 154bhp motor

Efficiency is impressive so far, with a mix of city roads and motorways

Boot is on the small size for the class, at 308 litres with the back seats up

Cabin is roomy for occupants with a generous amount of leg room

and YouTube, plus a karaoke mode, if you're so inclined.

Out on the road, early impressions are good. While there's little to excite the driver in any particular area, the Dolphin Surf seems well rounded in most departments. The car is comfortable in town and on country roads, and it actually can be quite fun on the right road in the right circumstances, although it's already clear that it's no match for the Renault 5 for overall enjoyment.

With my previous long-termer, the Citroën ë-C3, I complained about its poor economy and range; so far, the Dolphin Surf is far more impressive in those areas. There's a handy readout on the digital display that indicates your efficiency over the past 50 miles – and it is currently displaying 5.2mpkWh. That's really rather good, considering I've been dividing my time between city and motorway driving. At this rate, I'd beat the claimed range by more than 10%. If you stick to town driving, BYD says it's possible to exceed 300 miles, which is more than 7.0mpkWh.

All rosy then? Well, almost. Putting somewhat of a dampener on proceedings are the ADAS features, which are overbearing to the point of frustration. Some, including the lane keeping assistance, work well, but the intelligent cruise control overcorrects its lane adjustments on the motorway.

Thankfully, it's a feature you don't use all the time – unlike the driver monitoring system. Look away for a split second too long and it's on your case, telling you to keep your eyes on the road. Yawn at your peril – loud beeping duly follows, accompanied by a message alert telling you to take an immediate break. It's really quite stressful at times, and you have to turn it off every time you start the car.

Frustrating driver assistance systems aside, the BYD is so far proving to be well equipped and pretty good to drive. But then the same goes for the competition – the Hyundai Inster, Fiat Grande Panda and Dacia Spring among them. Let's see over the coming months if the Dolphin Surf can make some waves in what is fast becoming a flippin' compelling segment (sorry).

JACK WARRICK

TEST DATA

BYD DOLPHIN SURF BOOST
Price new £21,950 **Price as tested** £22,600 **Options** Polar Night Black paint £650 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Range** 200 miles (WLTP) **Economy** 3.9mpkWh (WLTP)

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
jack.warrick@haymarket.com

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE

Is our premium SUV up to the job of hauling a hoard of valuable vinyl?

MILEAGE 3612
WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT Can this upmarket SUV still hold its own in the face of fresher competition?

Can you fit more than 1000 vinyl records in the back of a Volvo EX30? It was a question I had cause to ponder recently, and I doubted the crossover was quite big enough. Thankfully, magazine editor Rachel Burgess was keen to try the EX30 so offered a car swap. Next question: can you fit more than 1000 records in the back of a Range Rover Evoque?

The huge vinyl haul belonged to my late uncle, and it has spent the past few years occupying a chunk of space in my mum's house. I found a company, Atlas Records, that bought whole vinyl collections – and it was based just outside of Taunton in Somerset, an hour or so down the M5 from my home town.

The motorway trip to Somerset reinforced the Evoque as a pleasingly relaxed cruiser, although, as Rachel has found, the 1.5-litre petrol element of the plug-in hybrid system sounds gruff as you work up the rev range. It's a shame the small battery – a reminder that this PHEV technology is dated enough to feel like vinyl in the streaming era – is so quickly depleted, since the powertrain is much more pleasant when it's electrically assisted.

On arrival at my mum's house I was more concerned with load space and making best use of the Evoque's 1383 litres of capacity with the rear seats down. It was a touch annoying the seats didn't fold entirely flat, but the quick-release mechanisms were easy to operate so there wasn't much faffing before it was time to start loading boxes.

The Evoque swallowed them all with ease, helped at least by the flat boot floor, relatively low boot lip and wide-opening rear doors. Better still, despite being weighed down with records, the Evoque maintained decent ride composure, even on the final stage of the journey to Atlas Records down some very bumpy Somerset lanes.

It proved that, while the Evoque may be the smallest model in the Range Rover line-up, it's still hugely practical, and underneath its premium sheen it's an admirable workhorse load lugger. Meanwhile, a few days later my mum was able to negotiate an agreeable sale price – more than enough, in fact, to cover the cost of the Evoque's Corinthia Bronze contrast roof.

JAMES ATTWOOD

LOVE IT

ROLLING REFINEMENT
It's comfortable and relaxed – you can see why premium buyers still love an Evoque.

LOATHE IT

SHELVE YOUR EXPECTATIONS
The rear parcel shelf is surprisingly awkward to fit through the boot when removing it. It let down the Range Rover premium experience a touch.

TEST DATA

RANGE ROVER EVOQUE AUTOBIOGRAPHY PHEV
Price new £58,275 **Price as tested** £62,975 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Economy** 34.1mpg **Last seen** 8.10.25

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
rachel.burgess@haymarket.com

Just for the record: wide-opening rear doors and flat boot floor were useful

MORGAN SUPER 3

Our open three-wheeler stretches its legs on a road trip to Bruges

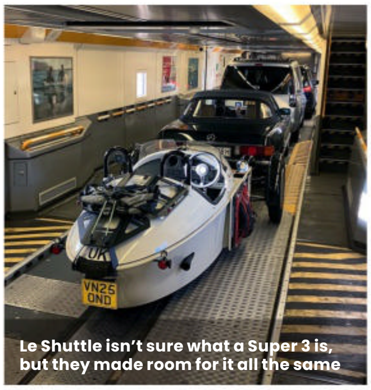
MILEAGE 1340
WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT Because it might just be the most fun car you can drive at any speed

I had to go to Bruges, and the options were either to take my old Audi A2 or get some touring miles under the wheels of the Morgan Super 3 before the weather became too cold for that sort of thing. So I opted for the Morgan, and it turned out to be a splendid idea.

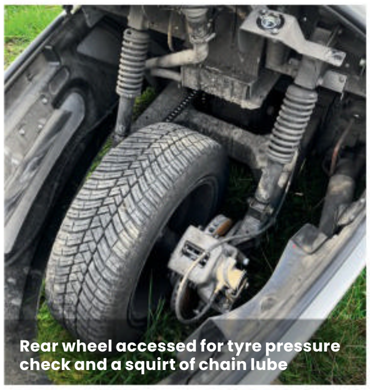
First, the pre-trip checks. For tyre pressures, at the rear you have to open the boot and remove the inner panel; at the front the fancy wheel design means the valves are accessed from inside and below the wheel covers, so you have to roll the car around until they appear.

Morgan's standard tyre pressures, all around 40psi, are quite high. (Some owners drop them to 30-something, and I may try this later.) While the back wheel was up and accessible, I lubricated the chain. Fluid levels are an easy check under the bonnet, secured with fiddly Dzus fasteners.

There's a reasonable amount of oddly shaped luggage space beneath the bootlid, plus plenty more if you load up the optional rear deck and side racks. Loads more luggage space than a motorcycle, then, and I'm told Super 3s are popular with people who used to take biking holidays. Here you can dress down and it's more sociable and warmer, although you can't filter through traffic.



Le Shuttle isn't sure what a Super 3 is, but they made room for it all the same



Rear wheel accessed for tyre pressure check and a squirt of chain lube

Because of the sparsity of these Morgans, and perhaps owing to the three wheels, it turns out that Super 3s aren't recognised by Le Shuttle's booking system. It would possibly be okay to enter the model as a 'Morgan Roadster' (technically I suppose it is but also isn't). But not being sure about the three-wheeled thing, I phoned them, and the booking was made by a kind operator – although at a marginally pricier large car rate, which they do for anything weird that doesn't show up on the databases.

After describing the Morgan, I was advised to take the small car lane to the train, where the rear wheel clonked slightly alarmingly over the grates that run along the middle of each carriage.

I opted for a fairly leisurely schedule as the best way to dodge early autumn showers, even though Bruges is only an hour and a half from Calais; it turned out to be a good strategy, because it rained lots. Folkestone is prettier than I knew, for an overnight stop; Dunkirk likewise for another. I usually load on the miles on a road trip, but it was nice to sit and write for a while, wait for a gap in the clouds and then get in another hour or so of driving.

Some continental countries insist trike occupants wear helmets, and while I usually do, it's not compulsory in France or Belgium (Belgium's rather sensible rule seems to be that if you sit on a machine, you have to; if you sit in it, you don't). So you can pootle around a city and enjoy the sights and sounds and smells without your head in a plastic bucket.

There's loads of parking on the edge of Bruges, and the city's so small that you can cross it on foot in half an hour, so I left the Super 3 in a station car park for £6 a day. The tonneau really is watertight.

The way back was a bit more hectic: from Bruges to Norfolk, and then home, in a day, but I would have taken it more easily if it wasn't for the rain. If you're moving in a Super 3 in heavy rain, you get a little wet – head and shoulders mostly; if you're going slowly, you get soaked. And while the interior is water-resistant, there's only so much the footwell heater and impossibly scorching heated seats can do.

But it's a really great road trip car. The driving position is comfortable, the range 250 miles or more, and it's a superstar wherever it goes. It makes even an ordinary journey feel special, so it makes a special journey feel a billion dollars.

MATT PRIOR

LOVE IT

PUT YOUR FOOT IN IT

You can tread on the seats to get in, but better is to rest them on a wee aluminium box section in front, then drop yourself in. Saves getting dirt on the upholstery.

LOATHE IT

A HEATED DEBATE

The heated seats have two settings: not quite warm enough or boiling. I keep flitting between the two.

TEST DATA

MORGAN SUPER 3
Price new £39,995 **Price as tested** £49,865 **Faults** None **Expenses** None **Economy** 48.1mpg **Last seen** 1.10.25

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
matthew.prior@haymarket.com

MAZDA CX-80

Is it practical to run a PHEV using public chargers?

MILEAGE 3960
WHY WE'RE RUNNING IT To see if Mazda has improved on the CX-60 and find its ranking among big SUVs

PHEV houses Type 2 and three-pin cables in well under hinged boot floor

An electric car is now the default for company car drivers, but the next best option in terms of tax liability is a plug-in hybrid – and it's a major part of the reason for the ongoing PHEV renaissance.

The logic behind the bandings is, of course, rewarding lower CO_2 emissions – but unlike with an EV, the carbon footprint of a PHEV is entirely dependent on how you use it. And if you 'can't make an EV work for you', it will be because you regularly do long journeys without time to stop and charge or you can't access charging at home or at work. I am one such person. So in an effort to lower my fuel bills and keep my conscience clean, I've tried plugging my CX-80 PHEV into a street-side public charger.

Five years ago, when I ran an EV, I was outraged to discover that charging facilities in Brighton and Hove, despite it having the Green Party's only MP and a Green-led council, were minimal and poor. Matters in my area have improved only slightly since then. Back then there was a janky 7kW charger and a 50kW one that required a physical card; now the latter is a BP Pulse unit that accepts contactless bank card payments (usually…) and the former has been replaced by a Blink unit that is reliable, controlled by a decent phone app and, according to Zap-Map, dispenses energy at 11kW – three big ticks.

The battery of the CX-80 has a capacity of 17.8kWh, so that BP Pulse charger should be able to fill it in just 20 minutes – except, unlike many premium PHEVs, this one can't take DC charging, meaning I will have to use the AC slow charger instead. Worse still, that 11kW claim turns out to be wrong: the Blink app states that it actually maxes out at 3.7kW – the same as you would get from a domestic three-pin plug.

Four and a half hours later, my charging session terminated itself after 15.02kWh of energy had been dispensed, at a cost of £6.88 (£1.38 of which was VAT – which people who can charge at home or work avoid).

Now, when I was driving on a flat battery, the CX-80 averaged 32mpg – at which rate £6.88 worth of petrol would take me 35 miles. Right, and its official electric-only range is 38 miles, so… Would you endure the hassle of parking on a random street to charge, walking 20 minutes home, then walking back to the charger four and a half hours later to collect your car, in exchange for a few pennies?

Me neither. In short, unless you can charge at work on the company account or at home on a cheap overnight energy tariff, a PHEV probably won't make sense.

What a shame, given how nice it was – and how much better for the local environment – to drive the CX-80 around town in smooth silence. More on that soon.

KRIS CULMER

LOVE IT

INTERIOR DESIGN

The loveliness of the CX-80's interior, with its light colours and mix of unusual materials, continues to charm people.

LOATHE IT

SLOW CHARGING

When PHEVs like the Toyota RAV4 and Volkswagen Tiguan can take 50kW rapid charging, why is the CX-80 limited to a mere 7.2kW?

TEST DATA

MAZDA CX-80 2.5 E-SKYACTIV PHEV TAKUMI

Price new £53,880 **Price as tested** £56,730
Faults None **Expenses** Screenwash £14
Economy 31.2mpg **Last seen** 8.10.25

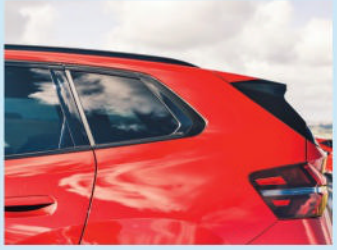
SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE
kris.culmer@haymarket.com

BW74 HTU
blink
Replacement charger works much better – but at a glacial 3.7kW

SNAPSHOTS

RENAULT 5

Mileage 10,250 **Last seen** 24.9.25
I'm finding it hard to believe how quickly the numbers are rising on the Renault's odometer. I seem to be averaging 2000 miles a month, which is a lot for someone who also drives other cars. It's happening because this car can fill so many roles and is so simply enjoyable to live with. At an average 4.2mpkWh it's also the most frugal EV I've had. I'm not absolutely certain, but I think it's due to go to a new owner late in November. That will be a bad day. **SC**



BMW X3

Mileage 4817 **Last seen** 1.10.25
This angle right here: I think this is the gel that binds all generations of X3. Over the course of four different marks there have been four different designers and four different platforms. But this kink in the rear window line ties all of them together. My car divides opinions on the design front, but this is a really neat touch. **MSc**

JAECOO 7

Mileage 1324 **Last seen** 8.10.25
The Jaecoo does have a wireless charger but, despite it being cooled, it does tend to make my phone very warm. Because of this I prefer to plug it in if I'm using Apple CarPlay, in order to avoid it overheating. Only trouble is, the USB and micro-USB sockets are right over on the other side of the central tunnel, so I have to find them by feel alone. **AC**

USED CARS

HOW TO BUY A LAMBORGHINI URUS

WHEN LAMBORGHINI HIT ON ITS BEST-SELLING FORMULA

The V8-powered Urus is a seriously quick, seriously capable luxury SUV

When the Lamborghini Urus was launched in 2018 there was incredulity: a pure-blooded raging bull that shared its basic underpinnings with a Volkswagen SUV? Surely not!

It wasn't VW-priced, though, costing from around £160,000 when new. Not cheap, but a bargain route into Lambo ownership, and a lot less than the related Bentley Bentayga. Lamborghini's first SUV was all about selling in volumes its supercars never could, and it quickly became the brand's best-seller: so far, more than 35,000 have been sold – more cars than the Sant'Agata firm made in the first 50 years of its existence.

Despite this, the market has yet to be saturated. The cheapest Urus on sale is still more than £130,000, even accounting for those that have previously been written off. That is remarkably low depreciation for an eight-year-old model, and when you consider that the value of a similar-vintage Bentayga has tumbled to £50,000, the Urus looks like a comparatively smart buy.

Well, smart if you can live with the brash looks – and if parking a 5.1m-long, 2m-wide behemoth with supercar power doesn't scare you, a used Urus makes an exotic alternative to fast family favourites like the Audi RS6 and BMW M5 Touring.

Most of those on sale are the 'standard' model, which uses Audi's 641bhp, 626lb ft 4.0-litre twin-turbo V8, giving a 0-62mph time of 3.6sec and a 190mph top speed. This made it the fastest SUV in the world at the time – and it's still right up there

Luxurious cabin is also spacious and practical in four- or five-seat form

with the quickest of them today.

A 2285kg SUV doesn't sound like a recipe for a great Lamborghini, but we were pleasantly surprised by its mix of strengths. As much as 87% of the torque can be sent to the rear wheels (or up to 70% to the front), so it is flexible and adjustable on the throttle. It's genuinely capable and engaging, a step up even from the Porsche Cayenne in some regards.

That dynamism and explosive performance doesn't come at the expense of utility: there's plenty of storage space and a decent amount of breathing room in each row. Some cars came in a four-seat configuration, but most buyers went for five, and each of those seats can comfortably take an adult. Plus, there are 616 litres of boot capacity before you start folding the seats, so the dog can come too.

Build and material quality aren't quite a match for the Bentayga, but if you're happy with the sort of finish you get in a top-line Audi, then you won't be disappointed – and the Urus can do all the light off-roading and towing (up to 3500kg) that makes the Bentley so versatile.

In 2023, the final year for the pure-petrol Urus, the range was updated and split between the S model and the Performante.

The S was more luxurious than before, and in Lamborghini speak nothing is more opulent than being able to overtake with ease, so power was boosted to a devilish 666 PS – that's 657bhp. Suspension tweaks meant Comfort mode now gave levels of refinement almost on a par with a Mercedes S-Class – if you avoided the optional 23in wheels.

The Performante took the same powertrain and added lots of carbonfibre (for the aesthetics, not the weight-saving). It was slightly lower, too, and it handled a little better as a result, but it sacrificed some of the well-roundedness that made the Urus such a crowd-pleaser. We would stick with standard or an S for the best balance of performance and comfort.

ALEX WOLSTENHOLME

What we said then

29 AUGUST 2018

"If the Urus isn't the kind of SUV that will make you wake up early on a Sunday morning just to go for a drive, no SUV ever will be. You start hustling the car, despite its size and weight, with much the same confidence you'd feel in a more overtly sporting car."

Despite its mass, the Urus is an agile and capable dynamic performer

> **"Dynamism and performance didn't come at the expense of utility. The dog can come too"**

How to get one in your garage

AN OWNER'S VIEW

FELIX ROBERTSON

"There are lots of good reasons why this is a silly car: the performance, the looks and the massive wheels. But rock-solid residual values speak their own language, as does the practicality and reliability. After having three faulty Range Rovers, I'm now on my third Urus – and I'm still loving it. Many people have been proved wrong: underneath the dramatic skin is a capable workhorse that still knows how to have fun."

BUYER BEWARE...

■ SERVICING

There might be a Volkswagen Touareg lurking somewhere deep underneath, but that raging bull badge means maintenance costs are inevitably much higher. We were quoted £1850 from an independent specialist for a basic first-year, 9000-mile service, which covered an oil change and filters. The recommended second-year service adds engine coolant, brake fluid and spark plugs to the to-do list, while the third-year seeing-to includes gearbox oil. The cycle then repeats. Don't buy one without a full service history from a main dealer or recognised specialist.

■ BRAKES

The Urus is a big, heavy car, and that's reflected in its voracious appetite for brake components. The 440mm standard carbon-ceramic front discs are larger than a Bugatti Veyron's and cost £25,000 for a set of four. The pads should be changed every 25,000 miles and a set costs £2000. Make sure there is decent life left on the brakes before buying, or use that as a bargaining chip.

■ TYRES

With big rims come lots of rubber. Wheels range in size from 21in to 23in, and the surrounding rubber will cost about £2000 every 8000 miles. That is for the L-branded Pirellis; anything else is likely to trigger a warning light.

■ PAINT

Lots of Uruses will have been crashed, so look out for poor paint jobs on hard-to-match colours.

■ WARRANTY

There have been few reliability issues reported, but nevertheless a warranty is always reassuring. The standard warranty is three years and without a mileage limit, but keep an eye out for cars

with an extended Lamborghini warranty for up to 10 years and 62,000 miles.

ALSO WORTH KNOWING

There are no trim levels as such, but there are desirable options you might fancy. The 14-way 'comfort' seats are superior to the standard eight-way items; leather on the dash helps lift the ambience of the cabin; and the panoramic sunroof is desirable, as are Bang & Olufsen speakers and Pirelli P Zero tyres.

Performante cars are also differentiated by their steel springs (instead of air suspension) and – optional – P Zero Trofeo semi-slick tyres. That's a big sacrifice in usability for 47kg of weight-saving, and it feels a bit much in the real world.

HOW MUCH TO SPEND

£130,000-£149,999

A wide range of options, most over 50,000 miles. There's even one with a full Mansory body kit – and 123,000 miles on the clock.

£150,000-£184,999

Lots of low-mileage, high-spec options from 2019 to 2021.

£185,000-£224,999

Late standard examples, plus plenty of S versions.

£225,000-£260,000

An array of S and Performante models. Only a little more to bag the heavily updated PHEV SE.

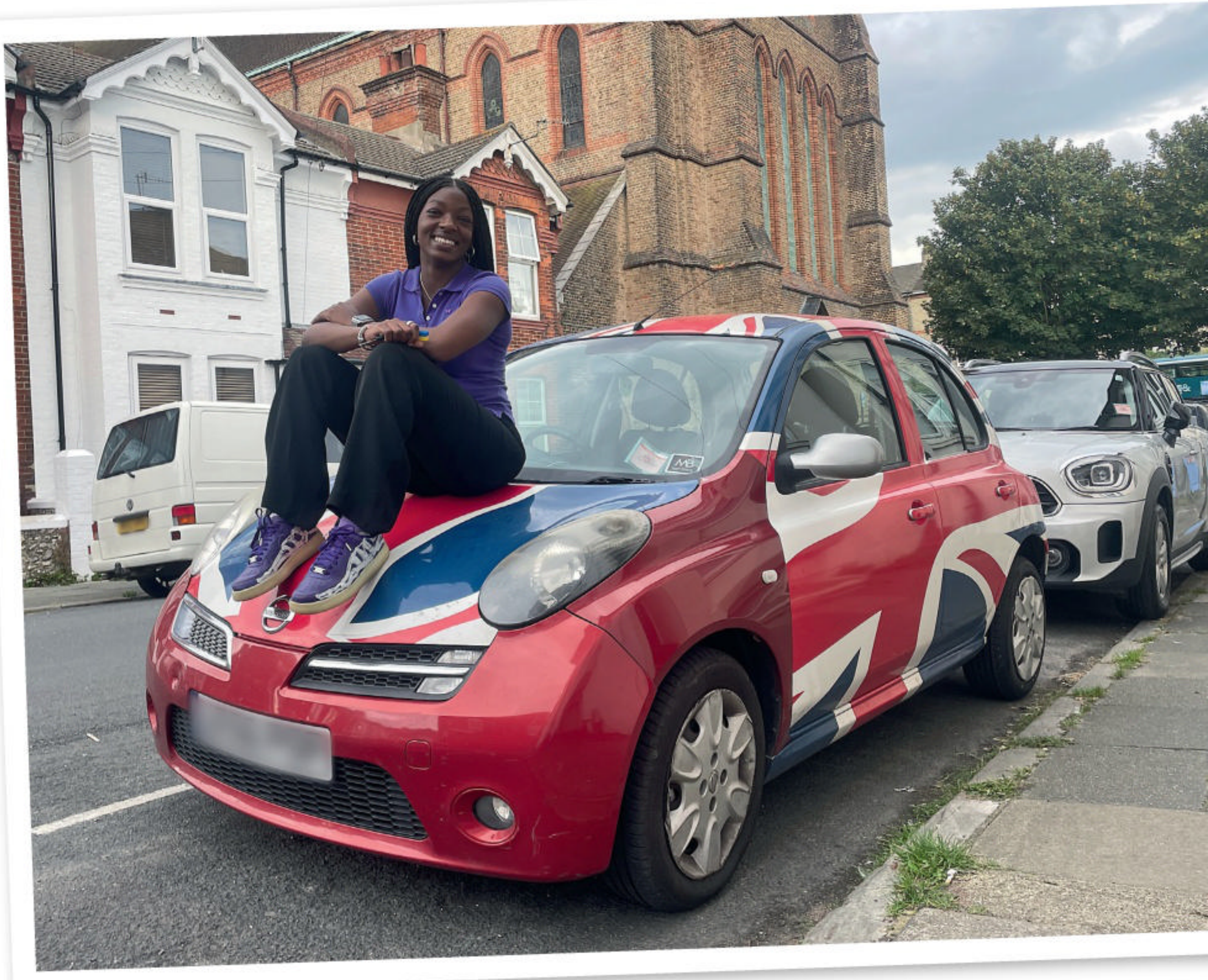
ONE WE FOUND

LAMBORGHINI URUS, 2019, 22,500 MILES, £159,995

Of the more than 200 used examples for sale, this was the only one we could see with all-silver wheels – and doesn't it look good? To make things better, it's paired with a tan interior and has an extended Lambo warranty.

My car & I

My striking Micra flies the flag for fun



Once you had got over the bemusement of seeing a Mk3 Nissan Micra cloaked entirely in a Union flag, who would you expect to be at the wheel? "People are surprised when they see me," says its owner, twenty-something Jess, with a big smile. "I think people assume it will be an old man with certain political views. Sometimes somebody will see it coming and take an interest, then see me up close and not look so happy any more – or just confused. I'm not making a political statement with it, though: it's just funny."

This begs the question: why did she choose such an oddity in the first place? "I wanted a car that I could learn to drive in and not worry too much if I banged it up a bit," says Jess. "I was scrolling through Autotrader and saw this, and it was dead cheap. I called and they were like: 'Please, please, nobody wants this!' I had to have it: one, it was crazy; two, nobody else wanted it; three, it was cheap, at around £1800 with not many miles; four, it would be funny. But also, it is such a sweet little car."

The dealer surely couldn't believe their luck – and must have been gobsmacked when Jess explained that she had trekked for four hours from Oxfordshire to Leeds to buy it.

Our cars

Introducing Autocar's other Renaultsport Clio

BY DANNY DAVIES

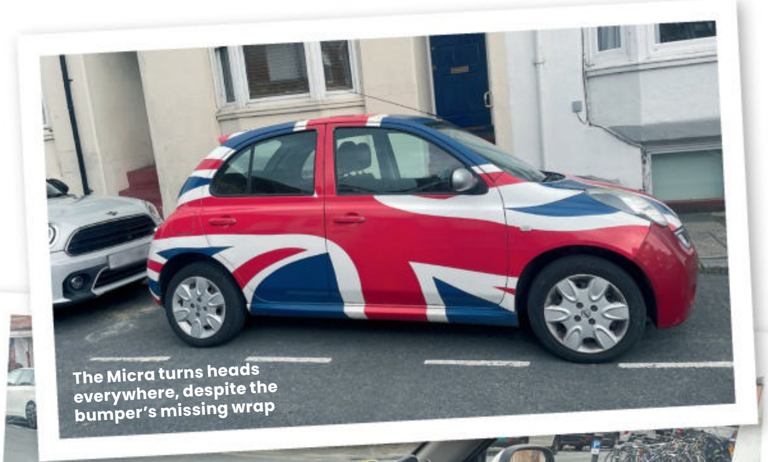
A few weeks ago, you might have read about my colleague Sam Phillips' Renaultsport Clio Trophy. Well, as it happens, he isn't the only member of the Autocar team with one of these awesome B-road weapons, because I'm also the lucky owner of a full-fat, Titanium Silver 182.

It's rapidly approaching a full 12 months since I collected the car from a hot hatch specialist in Yorkshire, and I'm pleased to report that the little Clio has been an absolute joy – for the most part, anyway. Upon collection, it had covered just 53,000 miles (needless to say that number has grown since), and, apart from an upgraded exhaust backbox from Milltek, the car is completely standard – which is unusual for Clios of this period.

This car is all about the driving experience: light, nimble and so adjustable, it just feels so well sorted on a good road. It also performed faultlessly during its first real test, which came in the form of a driving holiday to Wales earlier this year: I can honestly say there's no other car I would have preferred to take with me. If you couldn't tell, I'm pretty smitten.

Has it been a hassle-free year or ownership, then? Er, not exactly. But I'll spare you those horror stories for now.

The hot Clio is all about the back-road buzz: few other cars can match it



The Micra turns heads everywhere, despite the bumper's missing wrap

Low-tech infotainment set-up relies on cables and a phone cradle

> **"When the Queen died, people would stop on zebra crossings. Some of them even saluted"**

Unsurprisingly, Jess says she has been a magnet for attention ever since: "The other day, a guy just stepped into the middle of the road, got out his phone and started taking pictures. I was like: 'I want to go!' – but he didn't move. When the Lionesses won the Euros, people kept cheering at the car as I drove past. I guess they thought it was something I'd done specially for the football tournament. And when the Queen died, people would stop in front of me on zebra crossings. Some of them even saluted!"

Amazingly, her Micra isn't some homemade oddball but an official product. Well, kind of. When Nissan GB became the nation's biggest car maker back in 2009, it commissioned Kent firm Creative FX to decamp to Sunderland and wrap 163 Micras for dealers to use as promotional tools around the time of the scrappage scheme.

Nobody at Nissan GB is sure what was meant to happen to them next, but evidently some were sold to the public; Creative FX reckons about five survive. In fact, it supplied a repair kit for one recently. This might be good news for Jess, because her wrap is looking quite tired in some places – and the car is lacking decoration entirely on its front bumper.

"A few years ago I was on an icy rural road, going so slowly, but I still spun and hit a hedge, and it took off a whole corner of the car," explains Jess. "I went to some garages and they all said it's a write-off. I was like: 'No, it's not. I don't know anything about cars, but don't be silly!' Eventually I did find someone to fix it; I just needed to find a new fender, headlight and bumper. Sadly I couldn't find one with the flag on it, so I picked a red one."

I put it to Jess that most people would be tired of the constant attention by now, or at least looking to swap into something fresher and faster – after all, its 1.4-litre engine makes just 88bhp, and she needs to use a phone mount for her infotainment. Not a bit of it.

"I'm planning to keep it for at least another five years, maybe," she says. "It still drives okay, even though it's an old car. I eventually want to move to London for my career, but by then it will have over 100,000 miles and be barely hanging together, so I think I'm going to be its last driver…"

KRIS CULMER

CAUGHT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

AUDI A1 1.4 TFSI S LINE
2011, 52,500 miles, £6495
This low-mileage, one-owner A1 is an ideal refined urban runaround. It has an MOT until next August and four recently fitted tyres, and has just been serviced. Its 1.4-litre petrol has decent pulling power, and you'll easily get 50mpg day to day.

MAZDA 2 1.5 SKYACTIV-G SPORT NAV+
2019, 42,000 miles, £9990
This multi-talented supermini is the go-to choice for keen drivers, blending good economy and refinement with genuine pace and handling prowess. Our find, a Sport Nav+ model, is loaded with kit and is immaculate inside and out.

TOYOTA YARIS 1.33 DUAL VVT-i DESIGN
2016, 60,000 miles, £6495
Freshly serviced and MOTed, this tidy Yaris wants for nothing. It's fitted with lots of creature comforts and should achieve 55mpg on daily jaunts. It has only one previous owner and comes with a full service history.

SKODA SCALA 1.5 TSI MONTE CARLO
2020, 46,500 miles, £13,588
A Scala won't set your heart on fire, but this Monte Carlo example has contrasting paint, sports seats and a potent but frugal 1.5-litre engine. It's roomy and practical inside, too.

Head to head

RICHARD LANE

2000 BMW Z3 M COUPE

VS

SAM PHILLIPS

2015 PORSCHE CAYMAN 2.7

Brief: Find a daily-drivable manual sports car you can run and maintain on a sensible budget for less than £30,000

SP I'd have liked a 3.4 S, but this Racing Yellow 981 with the 2.7-litre flat six has kerb appeal and performance – and it's £27,999.

RL My rebuttal is this Z3 M Coupé, colloquially known as 'clownshoe' and up for £28,995. You'll be weeping if the Vanos fails and it's not ULEZ compliant, but this oddball reeks of the character.

SP I like a Bangle-era Bimmer, but I'd be sweating every time I climbed in. Sure, it has been cared for, but could it fulfil the role of daily driver? You could drive my Porsche to the Susten Pass and arrive relaxed and refreshed.

RL The Cayman is easier to live with, but the BMW still does 26mpg in normal driving. Visibility is also sensational, and that tractable motor is an all-time great.

SP Oh come on, the 981 has one of the best chassis Porsche ever developed, and when paired with a six-speed manual its driver appeal is bettered only by a 911.

RL You're right, there is nothing dull about a 981 Cayman. I'll therefore concede; I only wanted to pay tribute to the five-strong team of engineers who brought the absurd Z3 M Coupé to life from off the back of an Augustiner-Keller beer mat.

URGENTLY WANTED
2 CHARACTER PLATE LIKE 7R
OR 4A CASH WAITING
GENUINE PRIVATE SELLERS!
PLEASE CALL

SILVERSPEED

Celebrating 30 Years

Dealing in interesting number plates and cars for nearly 30 years been in this magazine for over 20 years!

Tel 07961 808069 • Email Silverspeedlondon@gmail.com

URGENTLY WANTED FOR CASH
DATELESS REGISTRATIONS
AND ALL CARS
ANYTHING CONSIDERED
PLEASE CALL!!

NEW STOCK

Plate	Price
NEW MAM4V	£2,995
NEW VVVI42	£2,495
NEW VJX3	£5,995
NEW 16VET	£4,995
VJVI	£15,995
1 NOB	£39,995
808 V	(Bobs or Bob 5th)£5995
AHE4P	£4,995
RXV 628	£1295
AMIIDUO	£1,495
NEW 1230T	£7,995
RYKIY	(Ricky) £5995
RRRIP	£7,995
21 VE	£12,995
ROL7S	£12,995
158A	£24,995
AKB88R	£14,995
SIRFO	£1,995
MMM4M	£9,995
615NUO	£1,695
A555SHA	£3,995
MEDI4A	£5,995
VYJ 100	£1,695
8 AHM	£12,995
GIJEO	£1,995
MUD 880Y	£4,995
VVV7V	£6,995
OOA8A	£3,595
819 JAY	£7,995
700 K	£29,995
ARI5BUS	£1,295
RADID	£6,995

ULTIMATE INVESTMENT RANGE

Plate	Price
140C	£29,995
140X	£24,995
58V	£54,995
100C	£19,995
KCN 1	£19,995
1 X0X	£29,995
1 VTV	£14,995
1 VDN	£13,995

NAME RELATED PLATES

Plate	Price
MUS55A	£16,995
AII5HAB	£6,995
NAD74A	£4,995
GUL74M	£4,995
N486 ELA	£4,995 (Nabella)
UDDIP	£3,995
M4X VW	£2,995
RI EHN	£9,995

CLASSY3X3'S

Plate	Price
333 OXU	£1,495
333 UXX	£1,495
444 XAA	£1,995
447 LBF	£1,495
RFO 447	£1,495
600 VUY	£1,995
601 DTO	£1,395
615 NUO	£1,995
PHH 618	£1,995
666VRX	£2,495
747 OYE	£2,495
101 VOY	£1,395
999 EKK	£2,995

GREAT VALUE 2X3'S

Plate	Price
10 XWE	£2,495
80 VXP	£2,495

SPECIAL INTEREST

Plate	Price
H00600H	£1,995
MAA2A	£3,995
OCT 4V	£3,495
17SDM	£6,495
VEX50	£4,995

GREAT VALUE BARGAINS

Plate	Price
J3RRX	£1,375
R2HRO	£1,375
RO51GAY	£495

URGENTLY WANTED
LOW MILEAGE
SPECIAL CARS
PROMPT PAYMENT
PLEASE CALL

Citroen AMI electric 2023 as new 800 plate AMIIDUO £1k extra miles awsome fun £5,495

Opportunity last of the Porsche Macan 2.0 Auto 2025 new black with beige trim Pan roof BOSE Hifi, upgraded 21 Alloys, comfort pack, electric seats, heated seats list price £69.5k you can have it for 66K

UNLOCK THE ARCHIVE

Get 13 issues plus access to the archive for just £57.49

SAVE 62%

ROAD TEST NEW LAND CRUISER
AUTOCAR
NEW TESLA
vs SKODA
AUTOCAR ARCHIVE

With an Autocar bundle subscription, you'll get the latest issue delivered to your door each week, as well as instant access to the digital edition via our app. Plus, you'll unlock our digital archive, putting 130 years of motoring history at your fingertips.

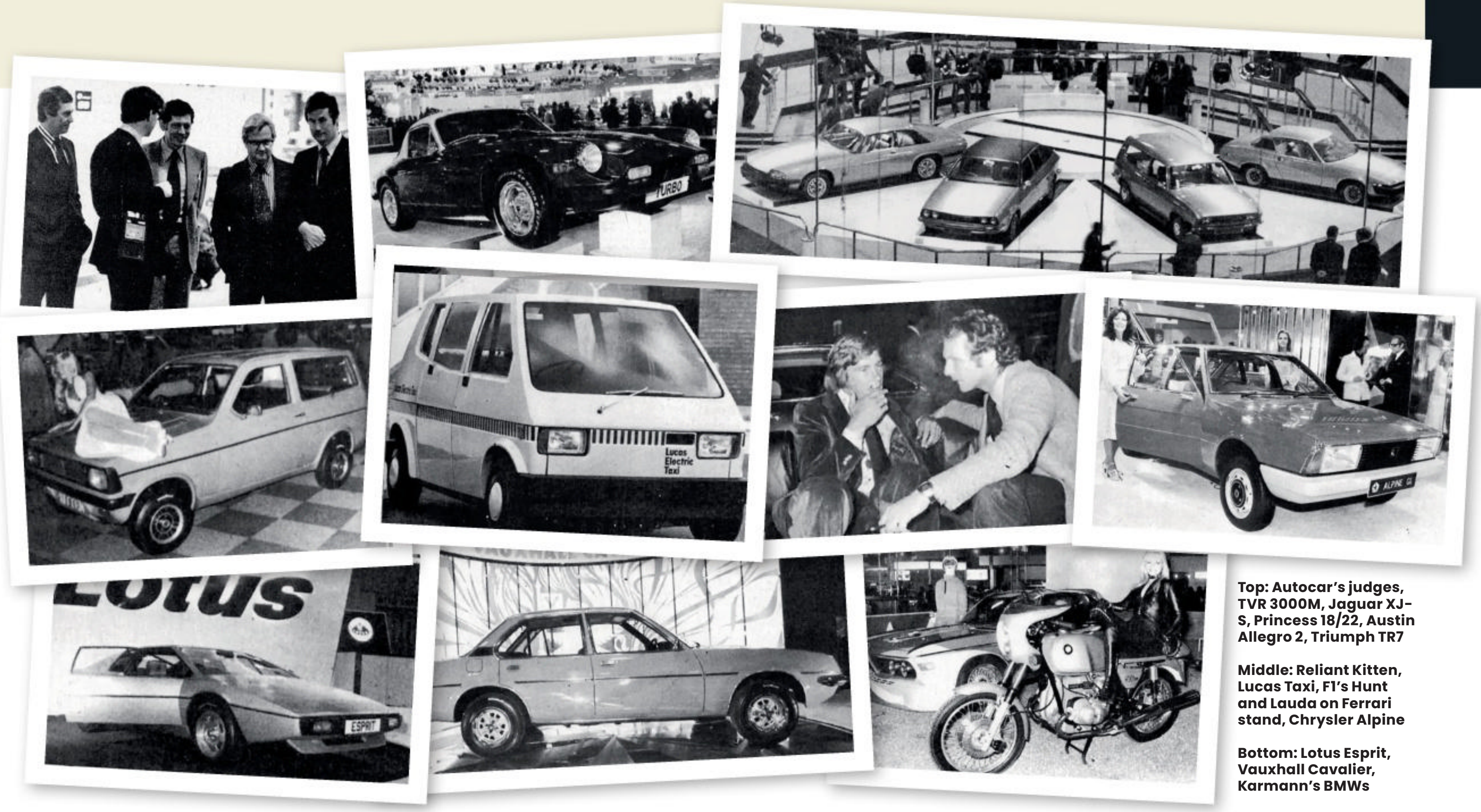
Order today at themagazineshop.com/2025PA/aca
or call 0344 848 8816 quoting '2025PA'

SCAN ME TO ORDER

AUTOCAR

TERMS AND CONDITIONS This is a UK-only offer. After your first 13 issues for £57.49, your subscription will renew at £57.49 every 13 issues. For overseas offers, please visit themagazineshop.com/2025PA/aca or call +44 (0) 1604 251 450. All savings are based on the UK cover price of £4.99 and are correct as of June 2025. Please allow up to 35 days for delivery of your first issue. Direct Debit rates are valid for one year, after which they are subject to change; should prices change, we will inform you in writing. Should you wish to cancel your subscription, it will be cancelled on expiry of the current term, which will not be refundable other than in exceptional circumstances. Details of the Direct Debit Guarantee are available on request. **Offer ends 29 December 2025**

The Autocar Lost in the archive



Top: Autocar's judges, TVR 3000M, Jaguar XJ-S, Princess 18/22, Austin Allegro 2, Triumph TR7

Middle: Reliant Kitten, Lucas Taxi, F1's Hunt and Lauda on Ferrari stand, Chrysler Alpine

Bottom: Lotus Esprit, Vauxhall Cavalier, Karmann's BMWs

London hosts a very '70s motor show

October in decades past brought excitement to British car enthusiasts, as the International Motor Show came to the Earls Court Exhibition Centre. So we thought we would go back half a century to 1975 – which, in a neat coincidence, was the event's diamond jubilee year.

Its status can't be overstated: as was the tradition, Autocar published special features for five consecutive weeks: show prospects, show guide, show number, show report and show review. Good heavens…

This was a grim time for Britain in general, with economic stagnation and inflation somehow coexisting, and a car industry in turmoil. Just months before the show, British Leyland had been nationalised after a government report had revealed that it was on the brink of collapse; many were sad that it had killed off its Wolseley brand; Jensen's stand was actually hosted by receivers appointed by the Bank of America; and there was bitterness about GM reducing unproductive Vauxhall to a mere rebadger of Opels.

Nevertheless, 25 British brands attended, many bringing new metal, alongside a similarly healthy cohort of imports, and attendance rose 4% to 450,000, having sunk to barely 400,000 during the oil crisis of 1973.

This year we complemented our usual sober tour of the stands with commentary by four leading lights of the industry: Tony Rudd of Lotus Advanced Engineering; Robin Herd of the March Formula 1 team; Roy Foster of Avis Rent-a-Car; and Tom Karen of design agency Ogle.

We started with Panther, the Surrey individualist displaying its new Rio luxury saloon alongside the flamboyant, retro De Ville coupé.

"It doesn't have the visual impact of a £10,000 car," remarked Foster of the Rio – but to our surprise, the De Ville made Karen, usually so modest, think he "could really show off in that, which is wonderful".

By contrast, Karen "wasn't sure" about Lancia's new Monte Carlo or indeed the future of two-seat sports cars in general, reasoning: "You can get up to 70mph a bit quicker, but that's all. You can take much less luggage, insurance is very high… Some people say that sports cars are good bird-pullers, but what can you do with a bird in a sports car? Very often there's a big tunnel between you, you can't move back, you can't move forwards, your steering wheel is jammed in front of you…"

Our judges were "uneasy" about Jaguar's new limo-derived coupé, the XJ-S. Karen thought it already looked dated. Herd said: "It's not that it's bad, it's just that in comparison to what they've done in the past, it's a nothing." And for Rudd, "it looks as if three people designed it and they weren't speaking to each other. I can't bear the [hexagonal] headlamps; they really offend me."

The Princess 18/22 saloon and Austin Allegro 2 that sat beside the Jag GT on BL's spinning centrepiece received praise, but Herd said the Triumph TR7 sports car was "just about the ugliest car I've ever seen".

As for the new Alpine family five-door by Chrysler (or was it Simca?), Herd was "delighted it is designed in England, sad it is made in France".

Our judges also took aim at Cadillac's latest barge, the Seville (Herd: "Here we have epitomised the taste of Americans – I can say no more"), and the Japanese brands (Rudd: "Their styling and design lags behind. And they can't make seats – maybe that's because they've been sitting on the floor for years").

But Herd was far more positive about the look of Lotus's new Esprit, and Karen concurred: "I have a lot of respect for [Giorgetto] Giugiaro, and I think he's done it again here."

German coachbuilder Karmann was showcasing its work for BMW. We said "the fully bearded and spoiled and bewinged 3.5 CSL racing coupé should delight the schoolboy visitors" and were rather miffed that a motorbike had sneaked in. "The best thing about that was the model who was sitting on it," said Herd.

We wouldn't print comments like that today, but this was the 1970s – and so there were plenty of models of both varieties. It was perhaps understandable that Reliant felt its Kitten supermini could do with some added glamour, but TVR really didn't need a practically naked woman to draw attention to its first turbocharged sports car, the V6 3000M, given that it would be one of the fastest cars made in Britain. And we were fortunate not to come across Ms Blaupunkt, who the audio firm had dressed in a shiny cyborg suit, unnerving face mask included.

On a more progressive note, we were fascinated by the electric taxi prototype by British parts supplier Lucas. Designed by our man Karen, it was meant to get a 100-mile range from lead-acid batteries – slightly more than a London taxi did daily.

Certainly it was more impressive than the Zagato Zele being peddled by Bristol: £1995 (that's £15,630 today) got you a laughable 6ft-long box with just two seats, a 40mph top speed and a 35-mile range.

KRIS CULMER

If you want to get lost in the archive...
Scan the QR code to read our stand-by-stand guide to the 1975 London motor show.

GETTY IMAGES

37220

3 WAYS TO CLAIM YOUR DISCOUNTS

For Terms, Conditions and exclusions visit machinemart.co.uk/pages/machinemartoffers

8 399021 801300

1. IN-STORE	2. BY PHONE	3. ONLINE
with this voucher	0115 956 5555 Quoting barcode No.	machinemart.co.uk quoting barcode No. at checkout

Machine Mart®

BRITAIN'S TOOLS & MACHINERY SPECIALIST

SELLING TO PUBLIC AND TRADE FOR OVER 40 YEARS

NEW CATALOGUE

GET YOUR COPY NOW!

- IN-STORE • ONLINE
- PHONE 0844 880 1265

500 PAGES

PRICE CRASH

SAVE £36 inc.VAT

INCLUDES SINGLE LOCKABLE DRAWER

ENGINEERS HEAVY DUTY STEEL WORKBENCH

- Sturdy lower shelf
- Durable powder coated finish

PRICE CRASH £269.00 exc.VAT £322.80 inc.VAT WAS £358.80 inc.VAT

CWB2000D
040317807

WORKSHOP EQUIPMENT

SEE ALL 25 ONLINE OFFER ENDS 21/10/2025

PRICE CRASH

GENERATORS AND POWER STATIONS

OFFER ENDS 21/10/2025

SEE ALL 14 ONLINE

2200W PETROL INVERTER GENERATOR

2.2kW

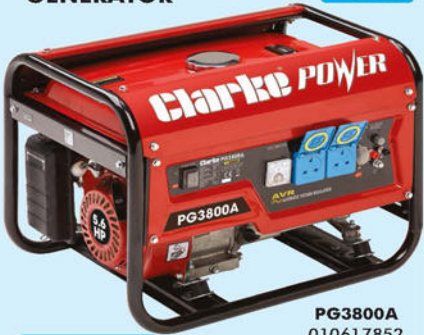
IG2300
010612302

PRICE CRASH £329.00 exc.VAT £394.80 inc.VAT WAS £454.80 inc.VAT

SAVE £60 inc.VAT

230V PETROL GENERATOR

2.7kW



PG3800A
010617852

PRICE CRASH £219.00 exc.VAT £262.80 inc.VAT WAS £298.80 inc.VAT

SAVE £36 inc.VAT

GARAGES/WORKSHOPS

PROTECT YOUR PRIDE AND JOY

LENGTH UP TO 40'

SPECIAL OFFER ends 21/10/2025 FROM £215.98 exc.VAT £259.18 inc.VAT WAS £287.98 inc.VAT

SAVE UP TO £275 inc.VAT

SEE FULL RANGE online

MODEL SHOWN CIG81220
140613576

ZIP-CLOSE DOOR ON ALL GARAGES

Model	Dims	Order Code	exc.VAT	WAS inc.VAT	inc.VAT
CIG81212	3.6 x 3.6 x 2.5m	140613584	£215.98	£287.98	£259.18
CIG81015	4.5 x 3 x 2.4m	140613570	£248.40	£331.20	£298.08
CIG81216	4.9 x 3.7 x 2.5m	140613574	£283.50	£378.00	£340.20
CIG81020	6.1 x 3 x 2.4m	140613572	£305.10	£406.80	£366.12
CIG81220	6.1 x 3.7 x 2.5m	140613576	£350.10	£466.80	£420.12
CIG81224	7.3 x 3.7 x 2.5m	140613578	£431.10	£574.80	£517.32
CIG1432	9.7x4.3x3.65m	140613594	£971.10	£1,294.80	£1,165.32
CIG1640	12x4.9x4.3m	140613596	£2,069.10	£2,758.80	£2,482.92

OFFERS THE PROTECTION OF TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS AT A FRACTION OF THE PRICE.

- UV treated & water proof cover for protection against rain and sun
- Rugged ratchet tight tensioning
- Heavy duty steel frame

BRIGHT, WHITE INTERIOR KEEPS INSIDE LIGHT

PRO TOOL CHESTS & CABINETS

SEE ONLINE FOR OUR HUGE RANGE OF TOOL STORAGE

FROM £149.98 exc.VAT £179.98 inc.VAT

- Superb professional quality, heavy duty, lockable tool chests & cabinets
- Ideal for use in automotive & industrial workshops

BALL BEARING ROLLER DRAWERS

1
2
3

	Model	Description	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
1	CBB209C	9 Dr Chest	070118032	£149.98	£179.98
2	CBB217C ‡	7 Dr Cabinet	070118057	£269.00	£322.80
3	CTC1300C	13 Dr Combi	070113042	£189.98	£227.98

‡ WAS £334.80 inc.VAT

ALUMINIUM RACING JACKS

Clarke RACING

FROM £104.99 exc.VAT £125.99 inc.VAT

- Quick lift
- Non-marking nylon wheels

CTJ1250AC

Model	Lifting Cap.	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
CTJ1500QL	1.5T	020112633	£104.99	£125.99
CTJ1250AC	1.25T	020111818	£125.99	£151.19
CTJ2500QLGB	2.5T	020112803	£159.98	£191.98
CTJ1800AB	1.8T	020113202	£189.98	£227.98

TURBO AIR COMPRESSORS

- Superb range ideal for DIY, hobby & semi-professional use

TIGER 8/260

FROM £104.99 exc.VAT £125.99 inc.VAT

‡ WAS £347.98 inc.VAT

Model	Motor	Tank	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
8/260	2HP	24L	000119490	£104.99	£125.99
11/550	2.5HP	50L	000119505	£159.98	£191.98
16/550	3HP	50L	000119510	£229.98	£275.98
16/1050 ‡	3HP	100L	000119515	£279.00	£334.80

HOT WASHER

HARRY 2
050412181

Break down stubborn dirt, grease and oil much faster than cold water

£579.00 exc.VAT £694.80 inc.VAT

145 Bar 2100 PSI

INC. CONTAINER FOR DETERGENT

SOCKET SETS & WRENCHES

LIFETIME GUARANTEE

Top quality chrome vanadium steel

£29.98 exc.VAT £35.98 inc.VAT

- 18 Sockets 8-32mm
- Reversible ratchet
- Comfort grip handle

PRO360
040810766

BEST SELLER

HUGE RANGE OF RATCHETS, SPANNERS & SOCKET SETS

- Ideal for tightening bolts & nuts to a desired torque value

£43.99 exc.VAT £52.79 inc.VAT

PRO238
040215238

MICRO JUMPSTARTS

FROM £49.98 exc.VAT £59.98 inc.VAT

JSM1200

Model	Start Boost	Peak Boost	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
JSM600	300A	600A	010319020	£49.98	£59.98
JSM1000	500A	1000A	010319025	£59.98	£71.98
JSM1200	600A	1200A	010319030	£69.98	£83.98

WARRIOR WINCH

PRICE CUT NOW FROM £79.98 exc.VAT £95.98 inc.VAT WAS £107.98 inc.VAT

UP TO 7938KG CAPACITY IN STOCK

20SPS12

Model	Order Code	exc.VAT	inc.VAT
20SPS12	020110281	£79.98	£95.98
25SPS12	020110296	£119.00	£142.80

EASY WAYS TO BUY...

CALL & COLLECT AT STORES TODAY

CLICK & COLLECT OVER 10,500 LOCATIONS

VISIT STORES NATIONWIDE

CALL 0115 956 5555

BROWSE machinemart.co.uk

BARNSLEY, S71 1HA	01226 732297	DEAL KENT, CT14 6BQ	01304 373434	LIVERPOOL, L3 5NF	0151 709 4484	PORTSMOUTH, P03 5EF	02392 654777
B'HAM GT. BARR, B43 6NR	0121 358 7977	DERBY, DE1 2ED	01332 290931	LONDON CATFORD, SE6 3ND	0208 695 5684	PRESTON, PR2 6BU	01772 703263
B'HAM HAY MILLS, B25 8DA	0121 771 3433	DONCASTER, DN2 4NY	01302 245999	LONDON EDM'TON, N18 020	0208 803 0861	SHEFFIELD, S2 4HJ	0114 258 0831
BOLTON, BL3 6BD	01204 365799	DUNDEE, DD1 3ET	01382 225140	LONDON LEYTON, E10 7EB	0208 558 8284	SIDCUP, DA15 9LU	0208 3042069
BRADFORD, BD1 3BN	01274 390962	EDINBURGH, EH8 7BR	0131 659 5919	LUTON, LU4 8JS	01582 728063	SOUTHAMPTON, SO17 3SP	02380 557788
BRISTOL, BS5 9JJ	0117 935 1060	EXETER, EX2 8QG	01392 256744	MAIDSTONE, ME15 6HE	01622 769572	SOUTHEND, SS9 3JJ	01702 483742
BURTON, DE14 3QZ	01283 564708	GATESHEAD, NE8 4XA	0191 493 2520	MC CENTRAL, M8 8DU	0161 241 1851	STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST1 5EH	01782 287321
CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3HL	01223 322675	GLASGOW, G4 9EJ	0141 332 9231	MC OPENSHAW, M11 1AA	0161 223 8376	SUNDERLAND, SR2 9QF	0191 510 8773
CARDIFF, CF24 3DN	02920 465424	GLOUCESTER, GL1 4HY	01452 417948	MANSFIELD, NG19 7AR	01623 622160	SWANSEA, SA7 9AG	01792 792969
CARLISLE, CA1 2LG	01228 591666	GRIMSBY, DN32 9BD	01472 354435	MIDDLESBROUGH, TS17 6BZ	01642 677881	SWINDON, SN1 3AW	01793 491717
CHELTENHAM, GL52 2EH	01242 514402	HULL, HU9 1EG	01482 223161	NORWICH, NR2 4LZ	01603 766402	TWICKENHAM, TW1 4AW	0208 892 9117
CHESTER, CH1 3EY	01244 311258	ILFORD, IG2 7HU	0208 518 4286	NORTHAMPTON, NN5 5JW	01604 267840	WARRINGTON, WA2 8JP	01925 630937
COLCHESTER, CO1 1RE	01206 762831	IPSWICH, IP1 1UZ	01473 221253	NOTTINGHAM, NG1 1GN	0115 956 1811	WIGAN, WN5 9AU	01942 323785
COVENTRY, CV1 1HT	02476 224227	LEEDS, LS4 2AS	0113 231 0400	PETERBOROUGH, PE1 2PE	01733 311770	WOLVERHAMPTON, WV4 6EL	01902 494186
CROYDON, CR2 6EU	0208 763 0640	LEICESTER, LE4 6PN	0116 261 0688	PLYMOUTH, PL4 9HY	01752 254050	WORCESTER, WR1 1JZ	01905 723451
DARLINGTON, DL1 1RB	01325 380841	LINCOLN, LN5 8HG	01522 543036	POOLE, BH14 9HT	01202 717913		

Calls to the catalogue request number cost 7p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. Calls may be monitored. All prices correct at time of going to press. We reserve the right to change products and prices. All products subject to availability, E&OE.

ROAD TEST RESULTS

Autocar's history of empirical road testing is the longest in the world. For more than a century, we have been verifying, scrutinising, describing and illustrating new cars in unparalleled detail. Driving impressions have always been a key part of this, around which the empirical tests have changed.

In pre-war years, we concerned ourselves with braking effort, gradient climbing capability and rolling resistance. Later our attention shifted to take in acceleration, top speed, stopping distance and cruising noise level.

Today we use the Horiba MIRA proving ground in the Midlands to take similar performance benchmarks of new cars – and we've recently expanded the test's remit to take in braking stamina over repeated stops and, in the case of electrified cars, DC rapid-charging performance and measured acceleration at both high and low indicated states of battery charge.

Our tests are designed first and foremost to assess the fitness for intended purpose of any given new car – and to do it better and more thoroughly than any other independent test there is.

You can dig deeper into that century of road testing with a subscription to the digital Autocar archive (visit themagazineshop.com/2025ED/ACA).

Matt Saunders, road test editor

STAR RATINGS EXPLAINED

Autocar star ratings aren't like those you may read elsewhere. We don't simply give the best car in any given class five stars, the worst one star and filter the rest in between.

Rather than thinking in entirely relative terms, we rank cars according to more abstract definitions of their performance, functionality and fitness for purpose, so that every particular verdict means something and has a degree of permanence.

We also penalise cars up to a star for what we consider particularly conspicuous and regressive failings concerning active safety systems or missing instrumentation or physical secondary controls.

☆ Hopeless, egregious. In some cases, potentially dangerous.
⯪ Appalling. An emphatic failure.
★ Very poor. Consistently flawed or seriously misconceived.
★⯪ Inadequate. Sub-standard in key areas.
★★ Mediocre. Acceptable at best.
★★⯪ Competent. Mostly average, with very few highlights.
★★★ Respectable. Consistently decent, with some strengths.
★★★⯪ Good. Well rounded and competitive in key areas.
★★★★ Very good. Sets some new class standards and misses few.
★★★★⯪ Excellent. Extends several key class standards.
★★★★★ Exceptional. All but flawless.

ABARTH

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
500 Esseesse ★★★★☆ 25.3.09 Charm on a stick. Raucous and fun.	7.6	6.5	1135	35.8	-
500e Turismo ★★★⯪☆ 9.8.23 A stylish and entertaining pint-size EV but pricey and needs refining.	6.9	6.4	1395	-	142
595 Competizione ★★★⯪☆ 26.2.14 Great when it's good but tiring when it's bad.	7.5	6.4	1135	39.2	-

ALFA ROMEO

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Giulia Quadrifoglio ★★★★⯪ 29.3.17 Everything you would want a fast Alfa Romeo saloon to be. A triumph.	4.5	3.2	1700	35.7	-
Stelvio 2.2D 210 Milano Edizione ★★★⯪☆ 3.1.18 Likeable, if short of class's usual refinements.	6.8	7.0	1815	49.7	-
Stelvio Quadrifoglio ★★★⯪☆ 9.1.19 A real driver's car, but it stretches SUV-related bounds of acceptability.	4.0	3.3	1931	31.9	-
Stelvio 2.0T 280 Veloce AWD ★★★★☆ 28.6.23 Short on premium refinement but meets its discreetly sporty brief well.	5.7	5.3	1784	32.2	-

ALPINE

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A110 Première Edition ★★★★★ 16.5.18 Hilarious fun delivered in effusive and accessible fashion.	4.7	3.8	1125	45.6	-
A110 Légende GT ★★★★⯪ 9.3.22 The best fast A110 we've seen but not quite the definitive version.	4.8	3.9	1140	40.2	-
A110 R ★★★⯪☆ 15.11.23 Hardcore A110 has its lures but probably not enough of them for its price.	4.2	3.5	1094	39.7	-

ARIEL

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Atom 4 ★★★★★ 9.10.19 Track-slayer is unrivalled for built-in quality and dynamic character.	3.2	2.4	680	39.2	-

ASTON MARTIN

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Vantage ★★★★⯪ 18.9.24 Baby Aston grows up to spectacular effect. A machine of stunning breadth and likeability.	3.5	2.6	1745	28.5	-
DBS Superleggera ★★★★★ 21.11.18 Effortlessly fast and intoxicating to drive, the big Aston is better than ever.	3.7	2.7	1910	25.6	-
Vanquish ★★★★⯪ 26.3.25 Aston's blown V12 lives on in a devastatingly effective super-GT.	3.1	2.3	1951	25.8	-
DBX 707 ★★★★☆ 30.11.22 A better DBX to drive, but still leaves room for improvement.	3.3	2.8	2278	26.2	-

AUDI

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A1 Sportback 35 TFSI S Line Style Edition ★★★⯪☆ 2.10.19 Luxury supermini lacks the polish to justify its high price.	7.9	8.4	1209	57.0	-
S3 Sportback ★★★⯪☆ 18.11.20 Audi delivers an effective if somewhat unlovable hot hatch.	4.8	4.2	1552	39.0	-
RS3 Sportback Carbon Vorsprung ★★★★☆ 9.7.25 Uber-A3 refuses to be defined just by its truly special five-cylinder engine.	3.6	3.3	1619	34.1	-
S5 Launch Edition ★★★★☆ 15.1.25 Rounded sports saloon with a characterful V6 and new-found dose of driver appeal.	4.1	3.8	2027	33.7	-
A6 E-Hybrid Launch Edition Quattro ★★★☆☆ 1.10.25 Big executive saloon is spec-dependent – and misses its marks here.	5.8	5.2	2197	40.0	52
S6 E-tron Avant Launch Edition ★★★⯪☆ 16.4.25 Strong technical showing is undermined by price and lack of discernible character.	3.7	2.9	2346	2.8	256
RS6 Avant GT ★★★★☆ 5.2.25 Retro visual charm meets unprecedented dynamism in big-hearted estate.	3.2	2.7	2144	26.3	-
A7 Sportback 50 TDI Quattro Sport ★★★⯪☆ 11.7.18 Easy on the eye and to live with but let down by stolid dynamics.	5.8	5.3	1880	53.1	-
A8 L 60 TFSIe Quattro Sport ★★★⯪☆ 17.6.20 Technically impressive but not as cosseting as a limo ought to be.	-	-	2330	-	-
E-tron 55 Quattro ★★★★⯪ 26.6.19 A rounded, uber-luxurious addition to the premium EV niche.	5.4	4.2	2569	-	218
E-tron S Quattro ★★★⯪☆ 2.6.21 A slick, tech-laden luxury operator but no dynamic landmark for EVs.	4.2	3.6	2643	-	-
Q2 1.4 TFSI Sport ★★★⯪☆ 9.11.16 Fit for purpose but a less compelling option than it might have been.	8.1	8.2	1316	-	-
SQ2 Quattro S Tronic ★★★★☆ 20.3.19 More fun than you might expect from a crossover or an Audi S model.	4.5	4.1	1530	34.5	-
Q4 E-tron 40 Sport ★★★⯪☆ 7.7.21 Practical, pleasant and efficient but not a superior premium product.	8.1	7.8	2112	-	-
Q5 TDI Quattro 204PS S Line ★★★⯪☆ 14.5.25 Pleasant and competitive but no particular step forward.	6.7	7.1	2072	42.6	-
Q6 E-tron Quattro Edition 1 ★★★⯪☆ 2.10.24 EV is hard to love, easier to recommend, with good dynamics and strong EV credentials.	5.3	4.3	-	2.8	247
Q7 3.0 TDI Quattro S Line ★★★★☆ 12.8.15 Plush, suave and spacious but so-so to drive.	6.2	6.2	2245	-	-
SQ7 4.0 TDI Quattro ★★★★⯪ 26.10.16 A class-topping blend of superlative comfort and usable performance.	5.1	4.5	2330	37.9	-
Q8 50 TDI S Line ★★★★☆ 26.9.18 Striking and effective SUV-coupé leaves us wanting more.	6.9	6.7	2285	40.1	-
R8 V10 Plus ★★★★☆ 30.12.15 Supercar grips and goes even harder but wants for its predecessor's delicacy.	3.1	2.6	1730	-	-
S E-tron GT ★★★★☆ 2.4.25 Audi's super-EV holds great appeal in its purest form but isn't at the bleeding edge.	3.1	2.4	2361	2.8	262

BENTLEY

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Bentayga W12 ★★★★⯪ 18.5.16 Versatile, genteel, luxurious SUV with a silken sporting edge.	4.9	4.4	2440	-	-
Bentayga EWB Mulliner Blackline ★★★★☆ 24.4.24 Stretched SUV lacks the Mulsanne limo's charm but is a better luxury car by far.	4.4	3.8	2600	25.6	-
Continental GT Speed ★★★★☆ 22.12.21 Remains a wonderful grand tourer but can fall short as an entertainer.	3.4	2.7	2279	22.0	-
Continental GTC V8 S ★★★★⯪ 19.4.23 Sporty V8 execution adds vivacity to a car that makes you feel good.	3.6	3.2	2295	29.1	-
Continental GT Speed Hybrid First Edition ★★★★☆ 16.4.25 Electrons make fastest GT quicker but not necessarily better.	3.1	2.5	2462	28.0	47
Flying Spur Hybrid Mulliner ★★★★⯪ 17.8.22 Mightily convincing PHEV limo more than earns its Bentley wings.	4.4	3.9	2596	30.1	28

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Flying Spur Speed First Edition ★★★★☆ 21.5.25 Hulking V8 hybrid powertrain broadens Spur's remit and skyrockets performance.	3.2	2.7	2750	26.7	44
BMW					
120 M Sport ★★★½☆ 31.12.24 Credible and complete junior BMW still lacks distinguishing driver appeal.	7.3	6.8	1489	45.8	-
218i M Sport Gran Coupé ★★★☆☆ 8.4.20 Junior Gran Coupé hits some high notes but fails to inspire.	8.8	8.4	1375	58.2	-
220i M Sport Coupé ★★★★☆ 1.6.22 A good coupé rather than a great sports car.	7.3	7.3	1546	46.8	-
M2 Coupé Manual ★★★★½ 12.7.23 Junior M car takes huge objective leaps but smaller subjective ones.	4.5	3.8	1687	32.1	-
320d M Sport Auto ★★★★★ 15.5.19 BMW's one-time default-choice executive saloon hits even greater heights.	6.9	6.8	1639	63.3	-
330d xDrive M Sport Plus Edition Touring ★★★★½ 15.1.20 An estate that's powerful, classy and great to drive – but with a price to match.	5.5	5.2	1922	52.6	-
330e M Sport ★★★★½ 1.7.20 Slicker and sweeter-handling than the average PHEV. A true 3 Series.	-	-	1740	-	-
M440i xDrive ★★★★☆ 6.1.21 A rounded, engaging and potent coupé let down only by its looks.	4.1	3.7	1775	44.0	-
M4 Competition ★★★★½ 21.4.21 A very modern M car and a brilliantly versatile and enjoyable one.	3.9	2.9	1800	32.7	-
M4 CS ★★★★☆ 23.4.25 Stunning performance and pace comes with costs that aren't so easy to justify.	2.9	2.5	1747	32.4	-
i4 M50 ★★★★☆ 19.1.22 Fast, refined and with lots of traditional appeal to convert sceptics.	4.1	3.2	2248	-	186
M4 CSL ★★★★☆ 16.11.22 A next-level M car, with the more complex temperament to match.	3.6	2.7	1625	31.1	-
M5 ★★★½☆ 29.1.25 A technical leap, but one born more out of necessity than inspiration.	3.5	2.8	2373	27.3	35
i5 eDrive40 M Sport Pro ★★★½☆ 29.11.23 Has dynamic appeal but less convincing than BMW's other EV saloons.	5.4	4.4	2213	-	235
550e xDrive M Sport Pro ★★★★☆ 3.4.24 Undeniably capable and a fine plug-in hybrid sports saloon.	4.4	3.5	2232	40.1	47
750e xDrive M Sport ★★★★½ 15.10.25 Look beyond its divisive design for a highly accomplished limousine.	4.8	4.2	2472	35.6	47

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
i7 xDrive60 M Sport ★★★★½ 15.2.23 It has taken huge strides as a luxury car – and still drives like a BMW.	4.5	3.4	2758	-	264
840d xDrive ★★★★☆ 16.1.19 A likeable big GT, albeit not the most luxurious or rewarding on sale.	5.0	4.6	1901	49.2	-
M8 Competition Convertible ★★★½☆ 5.2.20 Has attitude to spare but isn't the complete super-GT.	3.3	2.7	2020	31.6	-
M8 Competition ★★★½☆ 3.6.20 Highly capable but doesn't truly satisfy as either a sports car or a GT.	-	-	1960	-	-
X1 xDrive23i M Sport ★★★½☆ 25.1.23 A decent family crossover but a poor BMW.	6.4	6.0	1800	45.6	-
X4 M Competition ★★★☆☆ 13.11.19 Fast and precise, if short on the big-time charisma that you would expect.	4.0	3.3	2028	29.0	-
X5 xDrive30d M Sport ★★★★☆ 2.1.19 Better to drive than the SUV norm but not better across the board.	6.6	6.6	2279	43.1	-
X6 M Competition ★★★☆☆ 20.3.24 Unyielding performance focus makes for a fast but compromised SUV.	3.5	3.1	2442	29.3	-
X7 M60i xDrive ★★★★☆ 29.3.23 Uncompromising-looking X7 is seriously fast but laudably refined.	4.2	3.7	2600	28.9	-
iX xDrive60 M Sport ★★★★½ 9.7.25 Took the luxury EV to new heights in 2022 and nobody has caught up yet. Still great.	4.2	3.3	2637	2.7	314
Z4 M40i with Handschalter Pack ★★★★☆ 21.8.24 Manual gearbox gives six-year-old roadster new depth.	5.7	5.9	1561	36.9	-
BMW ALPINA					
B3 GT Touring ★★★★½ 15.1.25 Last-dance B3 has mighty breadth and will go down as one of the all-time greats.	3.3	2.7	1910	29.4	-
B8 Gran Coupé ★★★★☆ 22.9.21 Superbly rounded but lacking some dynamism implied by its looks.	3.5	2.8	2100	-	-
BYD					
Dolphin Surf Boost ★★★★☆ 6.8.25 Efficient, well packaged and well priced. Its minor transgressions are forgivable.	12.0	13.0	1385	3.9	173
Atto 3 Design ★★★☆☆ 31.5.23 Lack of attention to detail detracts from the impressive battery tech.	7.0	6.2	1787	-	201
Seal Design ★★★½☆ 17.1.24 Frustrating software lets down the mostly impressive hardware.	5.8	4.7	2116	-	279
CATERHAM					
Seven 160 ★★★★☆ 20.11.13 Fun entry-level version of B-road toy smacks just a little of compromise.	8.4	8.7	510	44.8	-

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Seven 620S ★★★★½ 9.3.16 Supplies fun intravenously with a mix of freneticism and road-going usability.	3.8	4.2	650	29.5	-
Seven 420 Cup ★★★★½ 31.8.22 Track-day variant serves up sensational driving thrills – for a price.	4.2	3.4	560	35.3	-
CHEVROLET					
Corvette 3LT ★★★★☆ 22.6.22 Big step up for charismatic, usable and temptingly priced American icon.	3.9	3.2	1679	32.9	-
Corvette Z06 3LZ ★★★★☆ 16.8.23 Incredible engine and chassis makeover, but the price has to be right.	3.1	2.4	1670	26.1	-
CITROEN					
Ami Colour ★★½☆☆ 11.1.23 Cleverly conceived but hard to recommend, given its limited capabilities.	-	-	471	-	39
ë-C3 Max ★★★½☆ 30.4.25 Predictable limitations but also plenty of usability, space and cheer for the money.	10.7	10.3	1479	2.8	-
C3 Aircross Puretech 110 Flair ★★★½☆ 7.3.18 Practical small crossover isn't outstanding to drive but is likeable nonetheless.	11.5	10.7	1159	39.5	-
C4 Puretech 130 Shine Plus Auto ★★★☆☆ 26.5.21 Has rational and irrational appeal but lacks a fine-tuned execution.	9.5	9.2	1320	56.4	-
ë-C4 X Shine ★★★½☆ 3.5.23 EV motoring done differently, with value, but its successes are qualified.	9.7	8.8	1623	-	162
C5 Aircross BlueHDi 180 Flair Plus ★★★½☆ 13.2.19 Attractive and interesting, although its style is better than its substance.	9.0	8.5	1540	47.8	-
C5 X Puretech 180 Shine Plus ★★★★☆ 28.9.22 Good value and comfy, this is the kind of car that Citroën should be making.	7.8	7.1	1502	47.8	-
CUPRA					
Born 204PS 58kWh V3 ★★★½☆ 6.7.22 As good as the family hatchback EV class gets in places but not as good as it could be.	6.7	6.2	1794	-	220
Born VZ First Edition ★★★★☆ 9.10.24 An already fine electric car's driver appeal is lifted but not transformed.	5.4	4.2	1996	3.5	269
Leon Estate 310PS VZ3 ★★★★☆ 8.9.21 Fiercely quick and dependable but pulls the heartstrings only lightly.	4.9	4.3	1707	40.1	-
Leon 2.0 TSI 245PS VZ2 ★★★★☆ 27.7.22 Brilliantly rounded hot hatch shines in its simplest spec.	5.9	4.7	1468	43.4	-
Ateca 2.0 TSI 4Drive DSG ★★★½☆ 23.1.19 Hot crossover is objectively impressive but lacks true driver reward.	4.9	4.4	1615	36.7	-

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Formentor 2.0 TSI 4Drive VZ2 DSG ★★★★½ 3.2.21 Versatile, interesting, rewarding. One of the best fast crossovers yet.	5.1	4.3	1583	36.4	-
Terramar 2.0 TSI 4Drive VZ2 ★★★★☆ 18.6.25 Hottish cousin of the Volkswagen Tiguan is likeable but a bit too sensible.	5.6	5.1	1737	35.0	-
Tavascan V1 ★★★☆☆ 5.2.25 Electric SUV is competent but not very compelling or memorable.	6.0	5.0	2129	3.2	246
DACIA					
Sandero Stepway TCe 90 Prestige ★★★★☆ 28.4.21 Compromised in surprisingly few areas.	11.9	11.9	1096	54.1	-
Jogger TCe 110 Comfort ★★★★½ 20.4.22 Superb versatility, outstanding value and so likeable with it.	11.0	11.0	1267	48.5	-
Duster Hybrid 140 Journey ★★★★½ 27.11.24 Notably improved yet barely any pricier.	9.7	8.7	1413	40.2	-
Bigster Hybrid 155 Journey ★★★★☆ 11.6.25 Big Duster in name, big Duster in nature.	8.9	7.8	-	47.5	-
DS					
3 Crossback Puretech 155 Prestige ★★★☆☆ 10.7.19 No design smash hit. Short on perceived quality and dynamic polish.	8.8	8.3	1205	48.6	-
4 E-Tense 225 Performance Line+ ★★★½☆ 29.6.22 High price and a list of niggles keep this family hatchback away from the top.	7.4	6.0	1706	44.7	26
7 Crossback Puretech 225 Prestige ★★★½☆ 19.9.18 DS's first SUV is a competent but slightly bland addition to the class.	8.6	7.0	1616	44.6	-
7 E-Tense 4x4 360 La Première ★★★½☆ 26.4.23 More focused and makes subtle gains, but its powertrain and ride frustrate.	5.7	4.6	1956	36.6	29
9 E-Tense 225 Performance Line Plus ★★★½☆ 2.2.22 Posh saloon is alternative and devoted to its luxury remit but no show-stopper.	8.6	7.1	1886	44.7	20
FERRARI					
296 GTB ★★★★★ 21.12.22 Stellar modern-era Ferrari supercar has an unrivalled breadth of talent.	2.7	1.9	1648	37.8	15
SF90 Stradale ★★★★☆ 3.11.21 Sets the performance benchmark but isn't a track-handling great.	2.5	1.8	1698	24.4	16
FIAT					
500 Twinair Lounge ★★★½☆ 24.11.10 Characterful and stylish, but its real-world economy lets it down.	11.7	13.0	1070	42.1	-

0–60mph | 30–70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

500e 42kWh Icon ★★★★☆ 26.1.22
More than just an electric city car and a welcome return to form.
8.1 7.7 1365 - 142

600e La Prima ★★★½☆ 27.3.24
Electric crossover is decent value and easy to drive but otherwise a bit easy to overlook.
8.8 7.7 1587 - 173

FORD

Focus 1.5 Ecoboost 182PS ST-Line X ★★★★½ 20.2.19
Better to drive and look at than before and impressively good value.
8.9 7.8 1417 43.8 -

Focus ST ★★★★☆ 11.9.19
Big on character and performance but not quite truly immersive.
6.1 4.9 1433 40.7 -

Puma 1.0T 125PS MHEV Titanium ★★★★½ 25.3.20
The driver's car the compact crossover class has been crying out for and more besides.
10.0 9.6 1260 50.0 -

Puma Gen-E Select ★★★★☆ 4.6.25
Ford finally brings engagement to the small EV class.
7.2 7.2 - 3.4 179

Puma ST ★★★★☆ 24.3.21
Well judged, versatile and fun. The jacked-up hot hatch done well.
7.2 6.2 1301 41.5 -

Explorer Extended Range Premium RWD ★★★½☆ 23.10.24
Electric family crossover is better to drive than rivals, but at a cost.
5.8 4.8 2067 2.9 262

Kuga 2.5 PHEV ST-Line ★★★½☆ 24.6.20
Good value and potentially frugal, but this SUV has more to give.
- - 1844 - -

Mustang Mach-E Extended Range RWD ★★★★☆ 23.6.21
Worthy of the name? Perhaps not, but it's still impressive and likeable.
6.8 5.6 2130 - -

Mustang Mach-E GT AWD ★★★☆☆ 27.4.22
Has its moments but lacks the dynamism of a typical fast Ford.
4.2 3.5 2298 - -

Mustang Dark Horse ★★★½☆ 20.11.24
Brimming with character but more compromised than many of its forebears.
4.5 3.5 1853 26.1 -

Tourneo Courier 1.0 Ecoboost Titanium ★★★½☆ 10.7.24
Has some Ford-typical star quality but not enough for the money.
10.8 10.6 1426 47.4 -

Tourneo Connect 1.5 Ecoboost PHEV Titanium ★★★½☆ 2.7.25
PHEV power is a smart choice in this versatile, though expensive, utility MPV.
9.7 9.5 1876 40.3 64

Transit Custom L2H1 320 2.0 EcoBlue 150PS Limited ★★★★☆ 8.5.24
Likely to remain the default commercial vehicle, despite a high price.
12.1 11.8 1971 38.8 -

0–60mph | 30–70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

Ranger 2.0TD EcoBlue 205PS Wildtrak ★★★★½ 14.6.23
Pick-up truck is practical, car-like to drive and generally hard to fault.
9.8 9.9 2348 36.6 -

GENESIS

G70 2.2 CRDi Luxury Line ★★★½☆ 10.11.21
Likeable left-field choice struggles to threaten the establishment.
7.2 6.7 1751 60.4 -

Electrified G80 ★★★½☆ 12.10.22
Electric limo doesn't quite hit the mark like its Kia and Hyundai platform-mates.
4.4 4.0 2349 - 272

GV60 Sport Plus ★★★★☆ 24.8.22
Handsome, fast, sophisticated electric crossover is the best Genesis yet.
3.8 3.1 2192 - 220

GV80 3.0D Luxury 5-Seater ★★★½☆ 15.9.21
Rich, spacious and comfortable but not a world-class luxury SUV yet.
6.7 6.6 2217 45.0 -

GWM

Ora Funky Cat 48kWh First Edition ★★½☆☆ 1.2.23
Electric hatch is decent value and has funky looks but is a mediocre experience overall.
7.7 7.2 1580 - 154

HONDA

E Advance ★★★½☆ 26.8.20
More than just a pretty face in the EV crowd but its limited range is an issue.
7.9 - 1535 - 110

Jazz 1.5 i-MMD Hybrid EX ★★★½☆ 7.10.20
Eminently practical, impressively frugal and pretty joyless to drive.
9.6 10.0 1248 57.0 -

Civic Type R ★★★★☆ 10.9.25
Road-legal touring car vibe perfected. Sensational – if a little serious.
5.4 4.5 1417 37.4 -

HR-V e:HEV Advance Style ★★★½☆ 24.11.21
Fine ergonomics and big on superficial charm but leaves us cold.
9.2 9.3 1397 43.2 -

e:Ny1 Advance ★★★☆☆ 1.11.23
EV is charming in some ways but has too little substance to justify the price.
8.6 6.9 1756 - 211

HYUNDAI

i10 1.2 MPi Premium ★★★★☆ 15.4.20
Smallest Hyundai regains leadership of the city car class.
12.3 12.9 999 52.5 -

Inster 49kWh Long Range 02 ★★★½☆ 24.9.25
Dinky looks but a surprisingly grown-up and versatile ownership experience.
9.6 8.8 - 3.3 179

i20 1.0 T-GDi 100 48V SE Connect ★★★½☆ 24.2.21
Steady gains for a versatile runabout still lacking some personality.
9.7 10.1 1065 63.5 -

i20 N ★★★★½ 25.8.21
N division's finest car to date. A serious hot hatch with real dynamic polish.
6.1 5.4 1231 50.6 -

0–60mph | 30–70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

Ioniq 6 RWD Ultimate ★★★½☆ 7.6.23
Usable, rangy and innovative EV let down by cabin packaging and ride.
7.2 6.2 2006 - 272

Kona 1.0 120PS Advance ★★★★☆ 6.9.23
Hyundai brings some cheer, value and space to the compact crossover class.
10.4 10.3 1352 50.4 -

Tucson 1.6 T-GDi Hybrid Premium ★★★★☆ 17.3.21
Tucson shows that Hyundai can do both style and substance.
7.6 6.2 1612 47.7 -

Ioniq 5 N ★★★★★ 7.8.24
A little big and heavy, but compelling like no other EV to date.
3.5 2.7 2221 - 224

Santa Fe Hybrid 4WD Premium ★★★★☆ 16.10.24
A superb lounge on wheels, but let down by its powertrain.
7.9 7.5 2007 32.9 -

Nexo ★★★½☆ 12.6.19
Impressive effort that heads in the right direction for hydrogen fuel cell cars.
9.6 9.7 1852 - -

INEOS

Grenadier 3.0 T Fieldmaster ★★★½☆ 20.9.23
Unquestionably a serious proposition but maybe lacking in innovation.
8.0 8.1 2682 20.9 -

JAECOO

7 SHS 2WD Luxury ★★½☆☆ 9.4.25
Chinese PHEV SUV is efficient and keenly priced but has too many usability flaws.
7.3 6.4 1814 35.0 41

JAGUAR

XF Sportbrake 300PS R-Sport AWD ★★★½☆ 17.4.19
Estate is built on enthusiast values but in need of a wider update.
6.6 6.2 1727 36.8 -

E-Pace D180 AWD SE ★★★½☆ 11.4.18
Misses the mark for keen drivers but is a desirable SUV nevertheless.
9.9 10.5 1768 49.2 -

I-Pace EV400 S ★★★★½ 12.9.18
Jaguar's landmark car strikes a heavy blow to Tesla's luxury EV monopoly.
4.5 3.5 2236 - -

F-Pace SVR ★★★★½ 24.7.19
Broad-batted and can vividly thrill but hasn't forgotten its SUV roots.
4.1 3.5 2070 29.4 -

F-Pace 400e R-Dynamic HSE ★★★★½ 1.12.21
Facelift hits the mark. Electrification is a mixed but creditable success.
5.1 4.6 2264 - 24

F-Type P575 R AWD Coupé ★★★★☆ 29.4.20
The same likeable bruiser behind those prettier features.
- - 1743 - -

JEEP

Avenger Electric Summit ★★★½☆ 24.1.24
Not perfect but successfully takes Jeep in a fresh direction.
8.3 6.9 1601 - 172

0–60mph | 30–70mph | Kerb weight | Touring economy | Electric range

Compass 2.0 Multijet II 140 4WD Limited ★★★½☆ 3.10.18
Pricey, pokey, gruff Jeep is a long shot for SUV market success.
11.0 11.5 1540 44.8 -

Compass 4xe S ★★★☆☆ 16.2.22
Not without niche appeal but off the pace in too many respects.
6.4 5.7 1872 46.9 22

Renegade 2.0 Multijet II 140 4WD Limited ★★★½☆ 28.10.15
Charmingly authentic but also pricey and rather rough and ready.
10.8 11.2 1502 52.6 -

Renegade 4xe Trailhawk ★★★☆☆ 30.6.21
Electrified Jeep has some charm but is typically rough and ready.
6.7 5.6 1816 39.4 21

Wrangler 2.2 Multijet II Overland ★★★★☆ 10.4.19
Off-road icon is now more competent on it.
9.0 9.1 2122 37.6 -

KGM

Tivoli XLV ELX Auto ★★★☆☆ 14.9.16
Practical, well-priced crossover is competent but far from compelling.
12.0 12.6 1469 - -

Torres 1.5T K40 AWD ★★½☆☆ 4.6.25
Cheerful enough, although not as cheap or capable as we had hoped.
11.3 12.0 1661 35.0 -

KIA

Picanto 1.0 MPI 2 ★★★½☆ 11.9.24
No great advance for the breed but likeable, capable and still here.
13.4 13.9 985 51.4 -

TOP 3

BEST FAMILY CARS

1 BMW 3 Series Touring

2 Dacia Jogger

3 Volkswagen Golf

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

Road tests revisited

2005 TOYOTA AYGO PLUS 5DR

New city car – a better-looking sibling of the Peugeot 107 and Citroën C1 – "represents the future of mass-produced, affordable motoring". It's very frugal and has an "infectious appeal", thanks largely to an excellent engine, but is also too cramped and too expensive.

Price £8320
Engine 3 cyls in line, 998cc, petrol
Power 67bhp at 6000rpm
Torque 69lb ft at 3600rpm
Weight 843kg
0-60mph 11.7sec
0-90mph 37.3sec
Top speed 98mph
Economy 60.1mpg

1981 TRIUMPH ACCLAIM HL

British Leyland's new Ford Cortina-rivalling saloon is actually a Honda Ballade with different seats. "It is fast, comfortable and economical and should be very reliable." It would nevertheless be the last car from this famous marque.

Price £4773
Engine 4 cyls in line, 1335cc, petrol
Power 70bhp at 5750rpm
Torque 74lb ft at 3500rpm
Weight 979kg
0-60mph 12.9sec
0-90mph 48.1sec
Top speed 92mph
Economy 31.8mpg

READ FULL ROAD TEST FOR FREE*

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Xceed 1.4 T-GDi First Edition ★★★½☆ 20.11.19 Looks good and drives well yet lacks some practicality and polish.	9.3	8.7	1452	46.8	-
Soul EV Urban ★★★½☆ 5.7.23 Not actually that cheap but likeable and complete.	8.0	8.3	1569	-	147
Niro EV 3 ★★★★☆ 7.9.22 A good family EV made better, despite some missed opportunities.	6.9	5.6	1739	-	246
EV3 81.4kWh GT-Line ★★★★☆ 31.12.24 New-era Niro is rationally compelling although it's not a game-changer.	7.2	6.4	1858	2.6	265
Sportage 1.6 HEV 2WD GT-Line S ★★★½☆ 15.6.22 Bold family SUV catches the eye but won't hold your interest to drive.	7.3	6.4	1658	44.8	-
EV6 77.4kWh RWD GT-Line S ★★★★☆ 9.10.24 Not the outstanding EV it once was yet still a likeably bold choice.	7.5	6.3	-	2.9	227
EV6 GT ★★★½☆ 4.10.23 Lots of pace and usability for the money but not enough driver appeal.	3.6	2.7	2161	-	209
Sorento 1.6 HEV T-GDi AWD 2 ★★★½☆ 20.1.21 Lacks polish, although its abundant utility appeal and value shine through.	8.5	7.9	2006	43.3	-
EV9 GT-Line S ★★★★☆ 31.1.24 Style, space, versatility and range for a more reasonable price than rivals.	5.1	4.6	2660	-	220

LAMBORGHINI

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Huracán Performante ★★★★½ 11.10.17 Breathtaking track makeover brings it close to greatness.	2.9	2.0	1590	22.4	-
Huracán Evo RWD ★★★★½ 20.5.20 Finest driver's car Lamborghini makes is also the most attainable.	-	-	1389	-	-
Revuelto ★★★★½ 4.12.24 New-era V12 Lamborghini is an extraordinary statement of intent.	2.5	1.7	1960	24.1	6
Urus ★★★★☆ 3.7.19 Italy's latest 'mostro' has a driving experience to blow your mind.	3.3	2.8	2285	28.5	-

LAND ROVER

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Range Rover Evoque P300e R-Dynamic HSE ★★★★½ 10.2.21 A better plug-in compact SUV. Expensive but slick and luxurious.	6.8	5.9	2158	32.7	24
Discovery Sport D180 AWD SE ★★★★☆ 8.1.20 Off-road fidelity and character outweigh a lacklustre powertrain.	10.3	10.5	2145	47.5	-
Discovery TD6 HSE Luxury ★★★★½ 12.4.17 A proper Land Rover, modernised, refined and as likeable as ever.	8.7	8.8	2230	-	-
Range Rover Velar D240 HSE ★★★½☆ 30.8.17 Stylish, advanced and accomplished but in need of a better powertrain.	9.3	9.0	2089	48.2	-
Defender 110 P400 X ★★★★½ 13.5.20 World-class capability. Brilliant on and off road – at a price.	-	-	2388	-	-
Defender 110 P635 Octa Edition 1 ★★★★½ 30.4.25 Outrageous, unnecessary and totally awe-inspiring.	4.6	3.7	2717	22.1	-
Range Rover Sport D300 Dynamic SE ★★★★½ 2.11.22 Deeply appealing and deeply accomplished, with a price to match.	7.2	6.6	2511	42.5	-
Range Rover Sport SV Edition One ★★★½☆ 28.8.24 More capable than most rivals, but others are more compelling.	3.9	5.1	2546	28.9	-
Range Rover D350 HSE ★★★★½ 13.7.22 A fantastically well-isolated luxury car and fully paid-up capable 4x4.	6.3	6.0	2667	35.9	-
Range Rover P550e Autobiography ★★★★☆ 9.4.25 A unique and enthralling character that brings added refinement in PHEV form.	4.9	4.0	2979	26.6	44

LEXUS

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
LBX FWD Premium Plus Design ★★★½☆ 29.5.24 Crossover convinces as a small premium car, but only just.	8.4	8.4	1306	45.2	-
NX 350h AWD Premium Plus Pack ★★★★☆ 16.3.22 Interesting, refined and efficient, although not as polished as the best.	7.1	6.7	1812	44.7	-
RX 500h F Sport ★★★½☆ 22.3.23 Classy and luxurious, but that might not be enough for keener drivers.	6.1	5.5	2088	31.7	-
ES 300h Takumi ★★★½☆ 6.2.19 Boldly styled, economical saloon has a singularly rational but dry character.	8.7	7.6	1742	48.8	-
RC F Ultimate Edition ★★★½☆ 6.11.24 Bellows in some ways, whispers in others. A little flawed but never dull or boring.	4.7	3.8	1733	30.1	-
LM 350h AWD Takumi ★★★☆☆ 7.2.24 MPV is a fascinating luxury-market curio but no threat to the old-school limo.	8.6	8.2	2368	40.5	-

LOTUS

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Emira V6 First Edition ★★★★½ 2.4.25 The British sports car is alive, well and expensive.	4.4	4.0	1493	29.0	-
Emeya 600 GT ★★★★☆ 28.5.25 A good electric saloon and a good Lotus.	4.1	2.8	2478	2.4	218
Eletre R ★★★½☆ 24.7.24 There's plenty to like about the new Lotus but little sign of the old Lotus.	3.1	2.2	2682	-	216
Evija ★★★★☆ 30.7.25 Mind-blowingly fast and intense, with some defining digital inhibitions.	2.8	1.9	1906	2.2	122

MASERATI

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Grecale Trofeo ★★★½☆ 18.10.23 A belting engine but high-priced and not the best-driving Grecale.	3.6	3.2	2097	33.6	-
Levante S Granlusso ★★★½☆ 8.5.19 Better engine improves the class's curate's egg but can't redeem it.	5.1	4.5	2232	23.7	-
Granturismo Trofeo ★★★½☆ 11.9.24 An appealing grand tourer that lacks some sophistication for the price.	3.6	3.1	-	33.0	-
Granturismo Folgore ★★★½☆ 26.2.25 Assured and likeable but could only ever be bought with the heart – even sans V8.	2.9	2.3	2358	2.3	183
MC20 Cielo ★★★★☆ 16.10.24 Dynamic iconoclast, old-school charmer, occasional GT. A unique supercar.	4.0	2.8	1783	29.6	-

MAZDA

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
2 1.5 Skyactiv-G 90PS SE-L Nav ★★★★☆ 22.4.15 The go-to option for keen drivers is also a convincing all-rounder.	10.4	11.0	1050	-	-
3 2.0 Skyactiv-X 181PS GT Sport ★★★★☆ 6.11.19 Sweet to drive and great to behold, but the Skyactiv-X engine is no knockout.	9.1	9.1	1425	57.0	-
MX-30 145PS GT Sport Tech ★★★½☆ 10.3.21 Has smart looks and a plush interior, but the first Mazda EV deserved more.	9.1	8.6	1663	-	-
CX-30 2.5 e-Skyactiv G Exclusive-Line ★★★★☆ 19.2.25 Alternative powertrain is a credit to this voluble, unconventional compact SUV.	7.6	7.6	1422	45.2	-
CX-5 2.2D 150PS 2WD Sport Nav ★★★★☆ 28.6.17 Still moderately left of field but now likeable in greater proportions.	9.4	9.2	1620	53.9	-
CX-60 e-Skyactiv D 3.3 RWD Exclusive-Line ★★★½☆ 10.5.23 Old-school in all the best ways, but the ride is difficult to overlook.	7.6	7.2	1893	52.3	-
MX-5 1.5 SE-L Nav ★★★★½ 2.9.15 An outstanding and usable sports car at an outstanding price.	8.4	7.9	1050	-	-

McLAREN

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
720S ★★★★★ 24.5.17 Sufficiently complete and exciting to dominate rivals and hugely fast.	2.9	2.0	1419	24.2	-
750S ★★★★☆ 19.6.24 McLaren's mainstay is a bit of a wild child – at times, to its own cost.	2.9	2.0	1412	28.8	-
Artura ★★★★½ 19.10.22 Brilliantly packaged, invitingly poised and wise use of electrification.	3.2	2.1	1552	32.9	17

---

*For three weeks from publication date

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Artura Spider	★★★★½	6.11.24	Artura finds extra form in convertible guise.	3.1	2.2	1618	27.2	17
GT	★★★½☆	27.1.21	Plenty of pace and purity, less GT-typical usability and refinement.	3.3	2.3	1580	34.2	

MERCEDES-AMG

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A45 S 4Matic+ Plus	★★★★½	4.3.20	AMG brings its hottest hatch yet to life without harming usability.	4.1	3.3	1661	41.5	-
C63 S E Performance 4Matic+ Night Edition Premium Plus Estate	★★★☆☆	31.7.24	Fascinating engineering feat falls flat as an exciting super-estate.	3.3	2.8	2217	27.1	7.1
CLE 53 4Matic+ Night Edition Premium Plus	★★★★☆	20.8.25	Appealing GT leaves something on the table.	3.9	3.5	2012	26.9	-
GT 63 4Matic+ 4-Door Coupé	★★★★½	13.3.19	AMG defies physics with a four-door GT that handles beautifully.	3.3	2.7	2135	30.1	-
GT 63 S E Performance 4-Door Coupé	★★★½☆	21.6.23	Rocket-ship GT with astonishing powertrain but still lacks driver reward.	2.9	2.5	2339	23.9	6
EQS 53 4Matic+ Night Edition	★★★★☆	8.6.22	Good but doesn't quite live up to its spectacular on-paper potential.	3.6	2.8	2673	-	259
S63 E Performance Night Edition	★★★★☆	2.10.24	Prodigiously quick, confoundingly slick in its handling, but has a coarseness to it.	3.5	2.7	2666	26.1	-
GLE 53 4Matic+ Premium Plus	★★★½☆	14.10.20	Remarkable dynamic versatility but lacks some driver appeal.	5.4	4.9	2471	29.4	-
SL 63 4Matic+ Premium Plus	★★★½☆	26.7.23	Stonking V8 doesn't quite redeem a car of as many sacrifices as gains.	3.5	2.8	1939	26.2	-
GT 43 Premium Coupé	★★★★☆	3.9.25	Less grunt with more grin for less outlay – but a rear-driven GT 55 would be better still.	4.5	3.7	-	36.6	-
GT 63 4Matic+ Premium Plus Coupé	★★★½☆	14.8.24	Fearsomely quick and truly usable but less lovable than before.	3.1	2.7	1972	30.7	-

MERCEDES-BENZ

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
A200 AMG Line Executive	★★★★☆	24.5.23	Significant progress for a keen-handling and efficient premium hatch.	7.8	7.3	1396	59.3	-
A250e AMG Line Premium	★★★☆☆	5.8.20	Falls some way short of a rounded 'premium' driving experience.	6.7	5.4	1665	57.8	-
B180 Sport	★★★★☆	3.4.19	In an ever-shrinking niche, this compact MPV deserves consideration.	8.4	8.3	1405	51.3	-
C300e AMG Line	★★★★½	4.5.22	Long-range hybrid tech gives C-Class an outstanding selling point.	5.8	5.1	2005	49.0	48
E220d AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★★☆	3.1.24	An effective blend of convention, comfort, luxury and modernity.	7.2	5.9	1917	65.8	-
E450d Estate Exclusive Premium Plus	★★★★½	19.3.25	Big-hearted diesel has speed, space and opulence. The only car you would ever need.	4.9	4.3	2167	46.1	-
EQE 350+ AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★½☆	4.1.23	Hot on comfort and tech but lacklustre on range, material quality and space.	6.0	5.5	2386	-	262
EQS 450+ Business Class	★★★★☆	7.5.25	Progress has been made, but this limousine still isn't quite the ultimate luxury EV.	5.9	4.9	2608	2.6	248
EQS 450 Business Class SUV	★★★½☆	6.3.24	Ultra-luxurious seven-seater strays confusingly into MPV territory.	5.5	5.2	2899	-	265
S580e L AMG Line Premium Plus Executive	★★★★½	6.4.22	Plug-in S-Class is the best of an otherwise ordinary generation.	5.2	4.2	2530	37.0	45
EQA 250 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★☆☆	17.11.21	Competent but entirely average. For the money, we expect better.	8.4	7.6	2030	-	200
GLB 220d 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★½☆	16.9.20	Smart looking and practical but its identity feels stretched at times.	7.4	7.1	1810	55.4	-
EQB 300 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★½☆	18.5.22	A versatile premium EV that doesn't easily command its premium.	7.7	6.8	2235	-	-
GLC 300 4Matic AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★½☆	13.9.23	Shines in places but doesn't notably elevate the GLC proposition.	6.5	6.0	1929	41.2	-
GLS 400d 4Matic AMG Line Premium	★★★½☆	12.2.20	Has much to commend it but not enough to be the S-Class of SUVs.	6.5	6.0	2634	38.2	-
G350d AMG Line	★★★★☆	17.7.19	Customary capability, charm and ego, now with 21st-century luxury.	7.5	7.2	2451	31.3	-
G500 AMG Line Premium Plus	★★★★☆	25.9.24	Anachronistic, iconoclastic and expensive but very hard not to love.	5.1	4.5	-	30.7	-
G580 with EQ Technology	★★★½☆	17.9.25	Electric G-Class has no true raison d'être but is still strangely compelling.	4.5	3.9	3140	1.6	209
CLE 300e AMG Line Premium Plus Coupé	★★★★☆	13.11.24	Electrification brings traditional Merc strengths to a desirable mid-sized coupé.	6.1	5.5	2122	37.1	49

MG

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
3 Hybrid+ Trophy	★★★½☆	12.6.24	No bad vices but lacks a final layer of polish.	6.8	6.2	1311	47.9	-
4 EV Long Range SE	★★★★☆	5.4.23	Good value, useful and fun to drive to boot.	7.1	6.1	1692	-	185
S5 EV Long Range Trophy	★★★★☆	23.7.25	It outstrips expectations for the money, except on range.	6.0	5.1	1723	3.3	217
ZS Hybrid+ Trophy	★★★☆☆	22.1.25	Roomier, cleverer and better-equipped than you would expect for the money.	7.6	6.6	1422	41.5	-

MINI

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
John Cooper Works	★★★★☆	14.5.25	A proper hot hatch let down by a stiff ride and an impenetrable user interface.	5.8	4.5	1363	42.0	-
Countryman C Exclusive	★★★½☆	17.4.24	Spacious but sends mixed messages on family-friendly refinement.	8.7	7.7	1618	46.9	-
Aceman SE Exclusive	★★★½☆	8.1.25	Compact SUV has the usual Mini charm but limited extra grown-up appeal.	6.8	5.7	1756	3.1	162

MORGAN

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Plus Four	★★★½☆	12.8.20	Refreshing and fun in that true Morgan way but lacks a little polish.	5.1	4.3	1013	54.0	-
Supersport	★★★★☆	6.8.25	Quite plainly the most polished Morgan to date yet still charismatic.	3.8	3.1	1180	44.2	-
Super 3	★★★★½	9.11.22	Adds some subtle modernity to the 3 Wheeler's endless giggles.	6.9	5.9	644	43.5	-

NISSAN

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Juke 1.0 DIG-T 117 Tekna	★★★½☆	29.1.20	Impressive in some respects but outstanding in few.	11.9	11.8	1256	46.0	-
Qashqai E-Power Tekna+	★★★★☆	8.10.25	Hybrid SUV takes big strides, not least on real-world efficiency.	7.6	6.1	1681	48.8	-
Ariya 87kWh Evolve	★★★½☆	26.10.22	Surprisingly traditional and luxurious although not wholly successful.	8.2	6.4	2109	-	-
X-Trail e-Power e-4orce AWD Tekna	★★★★☆	22.2.23	Capable all-rounder that deals effortlessly with everyday life.	6.6	6.0	1947	33.8	-

OMODA

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
5 1.6 TGDI Comfort	★★½☆☆	20.11.24	Chinese SUV has some promise as a purely rational buy but feels under-developed.	7.4	6.3	1474	38.2	-

PEUGEOT

				0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
e-208 Allure Premium	★★★★☆	6.5.20	Stylish, drivable, usable, reasonably priced – and the best small EV	-	-	1455	-	-
308 1.2T Puretech 130 GT	★★★★☆	25.5.22	A reminder of the old Peugeot magic. Small, supple and a bit special.	9.5	9.2	1358	55.3	-
408 Hybrid 180 GT e-EAT8	★★★★☆	11.10.23	Novel Peugeot shows an alternative path for the family car.	8.2	7.3	1746	42.1	40
508 BlueHDi 180 S&S GT Auto	★★★★☆	24.10.18	Stylish and likeable but lacking the polish of more premium rivals.	8.8	8.5	1671	52.0	-
508 SW Hybrid 225 S&S Allure e-EAT8	★★★★☆	8.7.20	This is a comfortable car that looks smart and feels classy.	-	-	1720	-	-
508 SW Hybrid4 PSE	★★★★☆	5.5.21	Hits notable handling highs but feels less than sharp elsewhere.	5.7	4.7	1892	44.0	-

TOP 3

BEST CONVERTIBLES

1 Mazda MX-5

2 Porsche 718 Boxster

3 Ferrari Roma Spider

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
e-2008 GT Line ★★★⯪☆ 30.9.20 Cheaper versions impress; pricier ones won't worry class leaders.	9.5	8.9	1638	-	-
e-3008 73kWh Allure ★★★⯪☆ 4.8.24 Electric family SUV is rich, handsome and refined but no technical tour de force.	8.5	7.1	2132	-	219
5008 Hybrid 136 GT ★★★☆☆ 12.2.25 Concept car style can't save the function-follows-form engineering.	9.9	9.4	1736	44.0	-

POLESTAR

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
2 BST Edition 270 ★★★⯪☆ 12.4.23 A creditable attempt at electric car thrills, although not quite fully formed.	4.5	3.4	2161	-	188
3 Long Range Dual Motor Launch Edition ★★★★☆ 12.2.25 Electric SUV is spacious, attractive and enticing to drive - with a few lapses.	4.6	3.8	2610	2.3	235
4 Long Range Single Motor ★★★☆☆ 24.9.25 Electric crossover is desirable but something of a missed opportunity.	6.8	5.5	2246	2.5	310

PORSCHE

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
718 Boxster ★★★★⯪ 8.6.16 Better than ever objectively, but at the expense of vital subjective appeal.	5.4	4.3	1395	35.9	-
718 Cayman S ★★★★⯪ 10.8.16 Still the greatest sports coupé out there, even if it doesn't sound like it.	4.8	3.9	1430	-	-
718 Cayman GT4 RS ★★★★★ 14.9.22 A feast of noise, revs, handling poise and thrills. Incredibly special.	3.9	3.0	1444	27.1	-
911 Carrera S ★★★★⯪ 3.9.25 Supercar quick but gloriously rounded with it.	3.0	2.5	1600	34.5	-
911 Carrera T ★★★★☆ 30.8.23 Sharper 911 has a likeable simplicity but makes key compromises.	4.9	3.8	1456	39.1	-
911 Carrera GTS ★★★★⯪ 5.3.25 Hybrid tech punts barnstorming Carrera into the supercar sphere.	2.8	2.6	1607	34.3	-
911 Turbo S ★★★★⯪ 10.8.22 Has a questionable raison d'être but is engaging and awesomely capable.	2.5	2.0	1640	36.3	-
911 GT3 PDK ★★★★⯪ 11.8.21 Less versatile than some past GT3s but still spectacularly good.	3.4	2.7	1430	29.2	-
911 GT3 RS ★★★★⯪ 22.11.23 Esoteric even by hardcore 911 standards but simply monumental.	3.2	2.5	1476	26.7	-
911 Dakar ★★★★☆ 10.1.24 Rally-raid-themed throwback charms like no other modern 911.	3.3	2.6	1660	36.0	-
911 S/T ★★★★★ 3.7.24 Porsche's GT division alters its recipe to deliver an all-time great.	3.7	2.6	1408	30.9	-
Macan Electric ★★★★☆ 13.8.25 Well rounded in every sense and not without quietly executed driver appeal.	5.2	4.2	2262	3.0	219
Macan Turbo Electric ★★★⯪☆ 19.2.25 Otherwise appealing EV is undone by chassis tech.	3.0	2.5	-	2.1	219
Cayenne S ★★★★⯪ 21.2.24 Rebooted Cayenne impresses and the charming V8 is our pick.	5.0	4.3	2256	28.8	-
Cayenne Turbo ★★★★☆ 5.9.18 As impressive as ever but not quite the driver's car it once was.	3.9	3.4	2307	31.5	-
Cayenne Turbo S E-Hybrid ★★★⯪☆ 27.5.20 Technically impressive but fails to make a convincing case for itself.	-	-	2490	-	-
Cayenne Turbo GT Coupé ★★★★☆ 20.7.22 Uncompromising rapid SUV is a bit of a monster – but a likeable one.	3.1	2.7	2251	26.1	-
Panamera 4 E-Hybrid ★★★★☆ 22.1.25 Understated plug-in hybrid is a Swiss Army knife super-saloon.	3.8	2.4	2370	30.1	29
Taycan Turbo S ★★★★⯪ 30.10.24 Porsche deftly keeps its superb EV on the boil.	2.6	1.9	2356	2.7	233

TOP 3

BEST COMPANY CARS

1 Volkswagen ID 7

2 BMW 5 Series

3 Kia EV9

SCAN THE CODE TO SEE THE TOP 10

RENAULT

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Clio TCe 100 Iconic ★★★★⯪ 27.11.19 Plusher, smoother, more mature. A car of substance as well as style.	11.6	10.9	1138	56.9	-
4 E-Tech Comfort Range Iconic ★★★★☆ 16.7.25 Charismatic but grown-up, the reborn 4 is a real contender.	8.2	7.5	1493	3.3	182
5 E-Tech Comfort Range Iconic Five ★★★★⯪ 12.3.25 Accomplished and well priced, the 5 changes the affordable EV game.	7.7	7.2	1461	3.1	166
Megane E-Tech Techno ★★★⯪☆ 23.11.22 Likeable and eye-catching, but rivals have moved the EV game on.	6.9	5.4	1688	-	198
Captur TCe 130 S-Edition EDC ★★★⯪☆ 18.3.20 Second-generation Captur should prove popular, but not with this powertrain.	9.4	9.2	1363	53.1	-
Arkana E-Tech Hybrid 145 S-Edition ★★★⯪☆ 13.10.21 Eminently sensible but unspectacular.	11.0	10.1	1365	58.3	-
Scenic E-Tech Iconic Long Range ★★★★☆ 26.6.24 The Scenic finally conforms but does so with style and substance.	8.1	6.3	1916	-	313
Austral E-Tech Iconic Esprit Alpine ★★★⯪☆ 19.7.23 Clever hybrid and pleasant cabin but let down by clumsy dynamics.	8.5	6.9	1696	43.5	-

ROLLS-ROYCE

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Ghost Series II Black Badge ★★★★⯪ 25.6.25 Only flirts with sporting appeal, and gives up no Rolls accomplishments in doing so.	4.5	3.6	2576	25.8	-
Phantom ★★★★★ 4.4.18 The world's greatest and finest luxury car is now also the very best.	5.5	4.4	2780	28.4	-
Spectre ★★★★⯪ 20.12.23 Superbly lavish and intoxicatingly refined, if shy of epoch-making.	4.1	3.1	2935	-	245
Cullinan Black Badge ★★★★☆ 19.2.20 Far more likeable to drive than look at, for those who have a use for it.	4.9	4.2	2739	23.6	-

SEAT

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Ibiza 1.0 TSI SE Technology ★★★★⯪ 19.7.17 Grown-up supermini shows its rivals how it's done – in most respects.	10.0	10.0	1047	55.6	-
Leon eHybrid FR ★★★⯪☆ 2.12.20 Competent and efficient but verges on being forgettable to drive.	7.2	6.2	1558	46.3	26
Arona 1.0 TSI SE Technology ★★★★☆ 15.11.17 Polished, mature all-rounder has since lost its class-best crown.	10.5	10.7	1149	40.9	-
Ateca 1.5 Eco TSI FR Black Edition DSG ★★★☆☆ 25.10.23 Once-appealing Nissan Qashqai rival now shows some signs of neglect.	8.9	8.0	1396	44.4	-

SKODA

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Fabia 1.0 TSI 95PS SE Comfort ★★★★⯪ 9.2.22 Comfy, spacious and good value, this supermini is Skoda at its best.	9.9	9.7	1117	58.7	-
Scala SE 1.5 TSI 150PS DSG ★★★⯪☆ 31.7.19 Different from the bigger Octavia but perhaps not by enough.	7.9	7.3	1200	52.9	-
Octavia 2.0 TDI 150PS SE L First Edition Estate DSG ★★★★☆ 2.9.20 Leads the charge to take Skoda upmarket and mostly succeeds.	8.4	8.7	1510	73.0	-
Octavia Estate vRS ★★★★☆ 29.1.25 A fine estate made more engaging rather than a great hot hatch made a bit bigger.	5.9	4.8	-	37.6	-
Superb SE L 2.0 TDI 150PS Estate ★★★★★ 17.7.24 The large, functional estate car modernised in all the right ways.	8.4	8.2	1673	68.7	-
Karoq 2.0 TDI 150PS Scout ★★★⯪☆ 30.1.19 Practical, comfortable Skoda is short on charm and dynamic polish.	8.9	9.6	1629	47.1	-
Elroq 85 Edition ★★★★⯪ 19.3.25 Comfortable, efficient, practical and intuitive; a well-rounded, class-topping EV.	6.1	5.0	2085	3.5	246
Enyaq iV 80 Lounge ★★★★☆ 18.8.21 Practical, rangy, well priced. Hits a sweet spot in the EV market.	8.3	7.8	2098	-	262

SMART

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
#1 Premium ★★★⯪☆ 8.11.23 Drivability frustrations mar an otherwise agreeable experience.	5.6	4.6	1861	-	229
#3 Premium ★★★⯪☆ 15.5.24 Makings of an interesting alternative EV but let down by the finer details.	5.7	4.9	1832	-	205

SUBARU

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Crosstrek 2.0i e-Boxer Touring ★★★⯪☆ 28.2.24 Improved manners for junior off-roader are welcome, if not transformative.	10.4	10.4	1620	45.3	-
Outback 2.5i Lineartronic Touring ★★★⯪☆ 27.9.23 A pretty good answer to a question that only a few people asked.	9.3	8.7	1690	42.8	-
Solterra AWD Touring ★★★☆☆ 15.3.23 A hint of Subaru-typical capability doesn't take this EV quite far enough.	6.7	6.2	2051	-	169

SUZUKI

	0-60mph	30-70mph	Kerb weight	Touring economy	Electric range
Across 2.5 PHEV E-Four CVT ★★★★⯪ 7.4.21 Excellent hybrid powertrain makes it one of the best PHEVs around.	6.4	5.8	1966	44.4	48

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

TESLA

Model 3 Standard Range Plus ★★★★☆ 4.9.19
Wrinkles aside, it offers great electric performance and usability at this price.
5.8 4.7 1633 - 156

Model 3 Long Range ★★★★☆ 14.2.24
Packs a real punch. Both updated Model 3s are fine propositions.
4.4 3.4 1846 - 277

Model Y Long Range Rear-Wheel Drive ★★★★☆ 27.8.25
Evolution keeps Model Y nicely on the boil – for now.
5.7 4.3 1903 3.2 315

Model S P90D ★★★★⯨ 20.4.16
Great EV, intriguing driver's car. Not quite the perfect luxury GT.
3.5 3.0 2220 - 214

Model S Plaid ★★★⯨☆ 2.8.23
Astonishing pace but not a fully rounded performance saloon.
2.4 1.7 2220 - 301

Model X 90D ★★★★☆ 15.2.17
High-rise EV strains under SUV brief but still feels like a history maker.
5.2 4.2 2508 - 147

TOYOTA

Aygo X Limited Edition ★★★⯨☆ 11.5.22
A mostly very grown-up small car but also an expensive one.
15.6 16.5 974 58.7 -

Yaris 1.5 Hybrid Design ★★★★☆ 23.9.20
Grows not only in stature but also in ability and subjective appeal.
9.2 8.8 1140 65.0 -

GR Yaris Circuit Pack ★★★★★ 3.3.21
Toyota, on a roll with driver's cars, provides yet another winner.
5.2 5.0 1283 39.2 -

Corolla 2.0 Hybrid Design Touring Sports ★★★★☆ 5.6.19
A big step up for Toyota in a vital sector and a better hybrid to boot.
8.5 7.7 1537 52.6 -

Prius Plug-in Design ★★★★☆ 23.4.25
Better late than never for best Prius to date.
6.6 5.6 1542 56.1 46

bZ4X AWD Vision ★★★⯨☆ 18.1.23
A decent effort all round but not exceptional in any way.
6.4 5.9 2023 - 208

Land Cruiser 2.8 D-4D 204 Invincible ★★★★☆ 21.5.25
Remains supremely tough but now has added kerb appeal and drivability.
10.3 10.3 2503 30.7 -

Mirai Design Premium ★★★★☆ 16.6.21
Impressive hydrogen fuel cell car has made strides but remains hamstrung overall.
8.7 8.3 1937 - -

GR Supra Pro ★★★★☆ 14.8.19
Fast, usable and has plenty going for it but leaves us wanting more.
4.4 3.6 1495 39.0 -

Hilux 2.8 D-4D GR Sport ★★★⯨☆ 1.3.23
Gazoo-branded Ford Ranger Raptor rival is formidable but lacks fun factor.
10.0 9.5 2241 32.5 -

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

VAUXHALL

Corsa 1.2 Turbo 100PS Ultimate Nav Auto ★★★⯨☆ 22.1.20
Supermini is improved in many ways but lacks the appeal to match its price.
11.2 11.5 1171 51.8 -

Astra 1.2 Turbo 130PS GS Line ★★★⯨☆ 5.10.22
Family hatchback's gentle push upmarket is only a qualified success.
9.9 9.2 1304 55.3 -

Crossland X 1.2 Turbo 130PS Elite ★★★☆☆ 7.6.17
Typically practical and well priced, but Vauxhall can do better.
9.8 10.3 1278 54.2 -

Mokka 1.2 Turbo 130PS Elite Nav Premium Auto ★★★⯨☆ 12.5.21
The driving experience sells a brave design effort just a little short.
9.3 9.1 1238 48.6 -

Grandland Hybrid GS ★★★⯨☆ 27.8.25
Spacious, functional, efficient and good value, yet neither grand nor lovely.
9.8 9.3 1623 52.2 -

Combo Life 1.5 Turbo D 100PS Energy ★★★⯨☆ 27.12.18
Usable, spacious and practical, if not very pretty to look at.
14.7 16.2 1552 60.1 -

VOLKSWAGEN

Polo 1.0 TSI 95PS SE ★★★★⯨ 31.1.18
Brings 'big car' space, class, kit and finish to this class like never before.
10.7 11.2 1145 57.1 -

Polo 2.0 TSI GTI+ ★★★★☆ 1.8.18
A usable, quick and vastly competent effort but not the most thrilling.
6.7 5.9 1342 46.8 -

Golf 1.5 eTSI 150PS Style DSG ★★★★⯨ 22.7.20
Additional strengths and familiar ones carry it back to the class lead.
8.3 7.8 1330 60.0 -

Golf 1.5 TSI eHybrid Style ★★★★⯨ 23.10.24
New plug-in Golf takes the PHEV hatchback's status to greater heights.
7.2 6.1 1619 46.5 -

Golf GTI ★★★⯨☆ 25.9.24
'Mk8.5' version of hot hatchback is slick and effective but not a big enough step forward.
5.3 4.4 - 47.2 -

Golf R ★★★★☆ 14.4.21
Most entertaining distillation of the Golf R formula yet – for a price.
4.4 3.7 1520 43.9 -

ID 3 Pro Performance Life ★★★★☆ 31.3.21
Bland but with the substance to further the zero-emissions push.
7.0 6.5 1757 - 145

Arteon eHybrid Elegance Shooting Brake ★★★⯨☆ 9.6.21
Striking PHEV appears radical but upholds Volkswagen's traditions at heart.
7.1 6.0 1783 52.5 -

ID 7 Pro Match ★★★★⯨ 13.3.24
Volkswagen finds some electric form in an unexpected format.
6.1 5.1 2162 - 239

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

ID 7 GTX Tourer ★★★☆☆ 13.8.25
Sporty electric estate is appealing but not the product the GTX brand needs.
5.3 4.6 2353 2.9 241

T-Roc 2.0 TSI 190PS 4Motion SEL DSG ★★★★⯨ 24.1.18
Shows performance verve, dynamic completeness and stylish swagger.
6.7 6.5 1534 37.5 -

T-Roc 1.5 TSI Evo R-Line Cabriolet DSG ★★⯨☆☆ 10.6.20
It brings little worth having to the compact cabriolet niche.
- - 1540 - -

Tiguan 1.5 eTSI 150PS R-Line ★★★⯨☆ 22.5.24
Functional and mature, but this isn't the engine or trim we would go for.
9.4 9.2 1606 44.9 -

ID 4 GTX Max ★★★⯨☆ 27.10.21
GTX adds flavour to ID 4 but doesn't reimagine 'GTI' for the EV age.
6.2 5.6 2220 - 200

Touareg 3.0 TDI 4Motion R-Line Tech ★★★⯨☆ 8.8.18
An inoffensive if forgettable bid at a luxury market breakthrough.
7.2 6.6 2292 41.6 -

Touareg 3.0 TSI eHybrid 4Motion Elegance ★★★⯨☆ 5.6.24
It's versatile and likeably unpretentious but won't be a default company car choice.
6.2 5.7 2446 34.1 26

Touran 2.0 TDI 150PS SE Family DSG ★★★★☆ 3.2.16
A spacious, refined and classy all-rounder – albeit a slightly bland one.
9.9 9.7 1666 - -

Multivan 1.4 eHybrid Style ★★★★☆ 8.3.23
Latest Volkswagen 'bus combines the best bits of both car and van.
8.4 7.1 2243 37.9 14

ID Buzz 77kWh Style Pro ★★★★☆ 8.2.23
It costs plenty but offers versatility and luxury accomplishments.
9.5 9.1 2498 - 185

Grand California 600 ★★★⯨☆ 2.1.20
Grandest California is classy but not half as clever as its smaller namesake.
15.8 16.7 3095 28.5 -

Transporter Sportline Black Edition Kombi SWB ★★★☆☆ 30.3.22
Not compromised but hardly enhanced by its sporting agenda.
9.1 9.0 2108 39.1 -

Passat eHybrid 204PS Elegance ★★★★☆ 13.11.24
Rounded and with good PHEV credentials, but less compelling than its sibling car.
7.2 6.4 1836 44.5 73

VOLVO

EX30 Single Motor Extended Range Plus ★★★☆☆ 1.5.24
Not enough key strengths – and not enough Volvo pragmatism.
5.7 5.1 1779 - 179

C40 Recharge Twin Ultimate ★★★⯨☆ 13.4.22
A transitional model for Volvo that doesn't go quite far enough.
4.4 3.6 2172 - 194

0-60mph 30-70mph Kerb weight Touring economy Electric range

XC40 D4 AWD First Edition ★★★★⯨ 7.2.18
Wieldy, classy and simple. As good as its bigger siblings, if not better.
8.5 8.5 1735 43.8 -

XC60 T8 Ultra ★★★⯨☆ 15.10.25
Volvo's crowd pleaser is still classy and spacious, though far from cutting edge.
4.6 4.1 2145 34.3 40

XC90 B5 AWD Ultra Bright ★★★⯨☆ 2.7.25
Still a mature, versatile and wilfully unspectacular choice.
8.0 7.5 2117 37.0 -

V60 T6 Recharge AWD R-Design ★★★★⯨ 21.9.22
Strong hybrid system gives ageing Volvo a lot of fresh appeal.
4.9 4.3 2036 38.0 51

V90 T6 Recharge AWD R-Design ★★★★⯨ 11.11.20
Hardly revolutionary but exceptionally appealing nonetheless.
5.6 4.9 2109 41.9 -

XPENG

G6 RWD Standard Range ★★★⯨☆ 26.2.25
Chinese electric SUV lacks inspiration but has plenty of rational appeal.
6.8 6.2 2067 3.3 208

WHAT'S COMING WHEN

Aston Martin DBX S Late 2025
V8 shove grows to 717bhp and you can spec parts that cut the SUV's weight to, erm, 2198kg.

Audi Q3 December 2025
New Q3 wraps familiar petrol, diesel and PHEV powertrains with a daring new design.

Toyota GR Yaris March 2026
New Aero Performance special with aerodynamic refinements is priced from £48,995.

SCAN THE CODE FOR THE FULL LIST

Why I love...
THE BUGATTI VEYRON

BY ALEX WOLSTENHOLME

Our testers found the Veyron mind-bending but perhaps too clinical

Two decades ago, Autocar drove the Veyron for the first time – and it blew us away. "The noise – a peculiar cacophony that sounds a bit like two TVRs on full reheat plus an industrial-strength air hose – is accompanied by mind-bending, heart-stopping acceleration, the like of which has never been felt before in a road car," gushed our tester.

And yet they didn't *love* it. "Despite the titanic performance and refinement, it doesn't grab you emotionally like it should" was the conclusion.

Surely there can be no criticism to level at this mega-powered monument to mechanical excellence, which, even at 20 years old, still feels every inch the soul-stirring headline-maker it was at launch.

To me, the most impressive thing about the Veyron is not that it has a 13mph greater top speed than a McLaren F1, nor that it was the first production car to break 250mph. Nor even that it had an 8.0-litre engine, four turbos and 16 cylinders (all of which had been seen before).

And although its 1000 metric horsepower was a first for a car with a warranty, tuners had been getting that much out of Toyota Supras for years.

So no, the most impressive thing about the Veyron to me is not the big numbers that have always been bandied about, but the attention to detail, the sumptuous interior and its civility.

The fact that it weighed almost two tonnes, had 10 radiators, held 15 litres of engine oil and cost well over £1 billion to develop might seem silly given the 240mph McLaren F1 was so much less resource-intensive yet not much slower.

Except an extra 13mph at 240mph isn't like an extra 13mph at 70mph. The force needed to accelerate a car rises exponentially with velocity. It's a quadratic relationship, so for every tiny increase in speed beyond 200mph, you must do an ever-increasing amount of work to achieve it.

Veyron was as focused on luxury as it was on outright performance

> **"It could crack 400kph and take two to the opera"**

Pursuing a top speed record is a vicious cycle. It requires more power and therefore a larger, heavier engine. Then you need bigger brakes to bring it all to a halt, beefier suspension to hold it to the road and better cooling to keep it from overheating – and that's before you've factored in the effects of downforce, friction and a plethora of other factors that get bigger and potentially more dangerous at speed.

But the Veyron was 800kg heavier than the F1 not just because of its greater top speed potential. It was also because never in automotive history had such a luxurious car topped 170mph, let alone gone 50% faster than that.

Volkswagen Group boss Ferdinand Piëch gave Bugatti an intimidating brief to create a car that could crack 400kph but he also stipulated that it should be able to take two people to the opera house in supreme comfort later the same day.

That we labelled the Veyron's interior "the most exquisite cabin on Earth" is testament to this near-unfathomable duality of purpose.

In so many ways the Veyron was unnecessary: not only unnecessarily fast but also needlessly difficult and expensive to engineer, precisely because of Piëch's mandated dichotomy, a brief none of the world's fastest cars had ever been set.

So I love the Veyron not just because it was faster than anything else, but also for the way it did it. We may never again have our minds blown by a car with numberplates in quite the same way.

What we did this week

GOOD DAY AT THE 'OFFICE'

To quote the inescapable social media cliché: 'How was your Monday? [fire emoji]' Mine involved Silverstone and a McLaren Artura. Sorry. I was at a McLaren owners' event, rubbing shoulders with some of Woking's wealthiest clients. One flew in that morning all the way from Hong Kong for a quick drive of his new V10 Solus – and then went straight back home.

WILL RIMELL

CATCHING SOME RAYS

I have much love for the tiny Kia Ray, a common sight on Korean roads. While driving the new EV5 (see p26), I spotted a Ray that had been converted into a mobile cleaning business, with all the kit you would need stashed in homemade shelving. Greatest cleaning van ever?

JAMES ATTWOOD

VOLUME SELLER

How do you make a tiny city car feel even smaller? Reveal it in a gigantic warehouse. Dacia showed us the diddy new Hipster at the world's first airship hangar, near Paris. I did some quick maths while waiting for a coffee: at 70m long, 40m wide and 23m high, 'Hangar Y' could technically accommodate about 6000 Hipsters. This is what you don't get in the press release.

FELIX PAGE

4 PINTS
THE NIGHT
BEFORE

One in five drink drive prosecutions happen the morning after[A], many unaware they still have alcohol left in their system from the night before. AlcoSense quickly and accurately tells you your blood alcohol level, so you don't become one of them.

The Telegraph

"a fresh level of accuracy in consumer breath testing"[B]

lite

0.8
alcoSense
lite 2

Only £44.99

ELITE

0.28 mg/L
alcoSense
elite 3

Only £79.99

excel

0.27 mg/L
alcoSense
excel
Auto EXPRESS
BEST BUY
2023

Only £99.99

pro

0.31 mg/L
Sober in... 5h 15m
OK
alcoSense
pro
evo
PRODUCT TEST
COMMENDED
AlcoSense Pro

Only £149.99

Buy in-store & online
halfords amazon Boots
alcosense.co.uk

alcoSense®
PERSONAL BREATHALYSERS

A: Source: DfT Road Accident Data 2015, B: Review of the AlcoSense Pro, 24/12/15. Intellectual Property: www.alcosense.co.uk/ip. © AlcoSense Laboratories, part of Now Group UK Ltd, Unit 3 MEC, Cordwallis Street, Maidenhead SL6 7BE

Here for the
automotive
industry

ben

Support for life

Life going off track?

We’ve got your back.

We are automotive.

We are your charity.

We are here for you.

Supporting you through life’s twists and turns.
Contact our free & confidential helpline.

☎ 08081 311 333
✉ supportservices@ben.org.uk
💬 ben.org.uk
💬 text BEN to 85258